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YVOR WINTERS

Problems for the Modern Critic of Literature

I

THE FIRST problem with which the critic of literature is confronted is to find a mode of living which will enable him to develop his mind, practice his art, and support his family. The universities offer the obvious solution, but the matter is worth at least brief discussion.

The universities as we know them today are of relatively recent growth, in this country certainly, and in a large measure abroad; they have developed during a period in which romantic ideas about literature have flourished. Literature has been regarded in this period as essentially an "expression" of emotion, has been so regarded by poets, professors, and critics about equally, and consequently that is what it has been in the main; and poets and other writers have been expected to be temperamental and irresponsible and consequently have often been so; and a great many temperamental and irresponsible people, who in more fortunate ages would never have thought that they were artists, have been led to believe that their personal weaknesses were signs of genius. Thus the professors have made a living by what they have regarded as the serious study of literature; but the men who have composed the literature were not serious, in the professors' opinion and sometimes in fact, and hence have been considered unfit to study or teach it. Each group has traditionally held the other in contempt.

When I was young, I and my contemporaries thought of Irving Babbitt, a man who was thirty-five when I was born, as a Professor, and with some show of reason: he held the title at Harvard, he had obviously read a great deal, he was quite obviously imperceptive in writing about poetry, and he held a number of ideas which might have been usable had he not simplified some and confused the others almost out of recognition. But for Babbitt's colleagues, Babbitt was a professor largely on sufferance: he was

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really a dangerous innovator. It was not that they had discovered the weaknesses in his critical system, for to the best of my knowledge there is no evidence in print to show that they had, though they made many irrelevant objections to it.[1] The trouble was that he was a critic and had defended criticism as an academic discipline and had attacked the colleges and universities for neglecting it.

But for the young men of my generation, Babbitt was the Professor in person: the other professors were an indistinguishable crowd. And Babbitt had a way of saying stupid things about great poems; so we looked elsewhere for our enlightenment. We found our enlightenment in Ezra Pound. Pound had enough scholarship to impress the young, but it was largely linguistic. He was incapable of thought, and his theories of poetry were merely restatements of principles which had been flourishing for over two centuries: the corrosive principles of eighteenth-century sentimental-romanticism and associationism. But we were ignorant, and his principles, as he stated them, seemed new. Furthermore, he had two closely related gifts which Babbitt lacked: he could write poetry, which, however it might be damaged by his theories, showed a real genius for language; and he could show us poems and passages which were genuinely fine. He showed us fine poems which we had overlooked, whereas Babbitt all too often misunderstood fine poems with which we were familiar. For about fifteen years Pound was the most influential critic in American letters, so far as practical results were concerned; and when he was replaced, it was by his disciple Eliot, who did little save restate his ideas in a more genteel style. Pound's disciples in the main in-

[1] The reader curious about Babbitt's positive program, that which he opposed to Romanticism, should turn to the "Introduction" to *Democracy and Leadership*. That which is specifically human in man, and ultimately divine, we learn, is the higher will, or will to refrain. This is opposed to the lower will, or expansive appetite. Babbitt gives the will primacy over the intellect and over the emotions. But the will must have standards: it does not occur to Babbitt that he is now giving standards primacy over the will. Standards, in turn, are derived by the imagination, which is the power which sees likenesses and analogies, in connection with the power which discriminates. These last two powers in conjunction would seem to be nothing more nor less than a new description of the discursive reason. Why Babbitt did not choose to face this fact and admit the primacy of reason, I do not know. But this reason, one should note, provides standards merely for the will to refrain: the expansive will is unguided; it is merely checked from time to time. There would seem to be no explicit ethics of positive action, and this defect is more obvious in Babbitt's friend Paul Elmer More, in whom the only good is renunciation and inaction.

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herited his ideas without his talents—the usual procedure—and since the ideas were bad, the result was bad. Pound might have been a much more effective critic if he had been able to study under a first-rate historian of ideas; but there were almost none of these in Pound's day, and he broke with the university system over a stupid incident at a small middle-western college, and he attacked the system violently throughout the rest of his career.

Pound and Babbitt represent the traditional cleavage well enough, even though Babbitt's colleagues may have thought him rather far to the left. Each had natural gifts which the other lacked; neither was trained in the areas in which he was deficient. Now I would not go so far as to say that training is a substitute for talent, but after twenty odd years of teaching, I am convinced that teaching is possible, and that if a man is brilliant in some one intellectual department, it is usually possible to improve him—and to improve him a great deal—where he is weak. But if such teaching is to be done, it ordinarily must be done by a man who is at least passably competent in all of the areas in question. Twenty-five years ago such men were simply not available in the American universities, and had never been. Today there is a fair number of them. The change represents a revolution in the teaching of literature. During these years the quality of traditional scholarship has improved as well, and I believe that the improvement is due in a considerable measure to the critics on the faculties. I do not mean that the critics invariably have all the answers, but most of them at least know what some of the important questions are, and they stimulate thought and perception; and the result has been a degree of sophistication among the younger scholars of my time which I did not find in my elders, and the difference, I suspect, is more a difference of education than of native gift, though it is also true that some gifted men are now staying in the profession who a generation ago would have seen no future in it.[2]

The revolution was initiated, doubtless, by Babbitt; but a hand-

[2] I have in mind a man two or three years younger than myself, one of the most promising men of my generation. He took an M.A. at Stanford and a Ph.D. at the University of California. He was an instructor for three years at Harvard. He then retired to an orange and olive ranch in the southern San Joaquin valley, and has remained there since. He had published, during the years of his activity, a fine collection of poems, a promising first novel, and a valuable book on Elizabethan Tragedy.

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ful of men of my generation bore the brunt of it: Ransom, Tate, Brooks, Blackmur, and myself. The Chicago critics, a few of whom are older than any of the men just named, moved onto the scene somewhat later. I am proud of my part in this revolution, but my part was not an easy one. Of the four gentlemen who have been head of the department of English at Stanford in my time, the second, the late Professor A. G. Kennedy, told me that criticism and scholarship do not mix, that if I wanted to become a serious scholar I should give up criticism. He told me likewise that poetry and scholarship do not mix, and that he had given up writing poetry at the age of twenty-five. And he added that my publications were a disgrace to the department. Fortunately for myself, he was the only one of the four department heads to hold these views, but one was almost enough. And he was far from an exception so far as the profession as a whole was concerned. There were other men like him at Stanford, some in positions of greater power; and there were others like him elsewhere. At least two of the critics whom I have mentioned in connection with myself have had comparable experiences, and I have heard respectable scholars tell stories of boorish rudeness to or concerning one or two of these men, have heard them tell the stories as if the incidents were triumphs of the intellect or of humor or of both. A good deal of this kind of thing is due to ineradicable human jealousy; but a good deal of it is due to the traditional cleavage which I have mentioned, and in so far as it is due to this should become less active with time. But I and my critical associates are still something very like bohemians in the eyes of many of our colleagues. In fact the Chicago critics, all of whom were respectable historical scholars before they avowed their interest in criticism, have been looked on with a good deal of hostility by other scholars for some years, as if they were somehow renegades; and they in turn seem to regard all other critics, no matter what their degrees or academic positions, as unbaptized or worse.

But the Chicago group are technically professors, in spite of what other professors may have thought. My casual impression is that the Chicago group are somewhat more methodical scholars in the traditional forms of scholarship than are the so-called New Critics whom I have just mentioned, and are somewhat less talented in understanding works of literature. But the two groups

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have gotten close enough together so that they can—as such people go—understand each other to some extent whenever they are willing to make the effort. And they have actually crossed lines here and there: Mr. Elder Olson, one of the Chicagoans, has written a book praising one of the most naïve romantics of our time, the late Dylan Thomas. I doubt—or let me say that I hope I may safely doubt—that any of my bohemian associates would be quite so innocent.

II

The scholars, in brief, have become more literary, even when they appear at times, like Professor Olson, to be sowing a belated crop of wild oats, and the literary men have become more scholarly, and both groups are in the universities; and this is a gain of the utmost importance, especially for the young men who are now taking advanced degrees in literature. But what are the other achievements of criticism in our time? What have the critics done besides asking important questions, propounding incomplete or untenable theories, attacking each other's theories, and defending their preferences for particular works? Besides irritating the older scholars to a modicum of thought and stimulating the graduate students of the country to more active thought about literature than we have ever witnessed before? Is it fair that we should ask more of them than this? I think it fair that we should ask more, and I think that they have done very little more.

If we are to have any kind of critical guidance, we shall have to have some kind of critical method or methods that are really applicable to the business in hand. If we are to have any kind of critical method, we shall have to understand two topics with more or less clarity: the potentialities of different kinds of subject matter and the potentialities of various literary forms. Any understanding of these topics, in turn, will depend upon our view of the purpose, or final cause, of literature. In general, our critics have been afraid to commit themselves to any theory of a final cause, or if they suggest one have been afraid to state it clearly and to endeavor to implement it, and thus have been crippled from the start. The theories that have been offered will hardly endure inspection.

Let me illustrate.

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I have written at length of T. S. Eliot and of John Crowe Ransom elsewhere. Both men have criticized individual poems and other works in more or less detail and hence have exposed themselves to attack in a way for which—if I may borrow a phrase from Mr. Ransom—I honor them. It is only by such criticism that we lay the groundwork for general theories; and the men who are willing to engage in such criticism have the courage of their convictions. Similar work has been performed by Tate, Brooks, and Blackmur. Many others have done such work, it goes without saying, but these are the men who have influenced our time more than any others. Eliot is an extremely contradictory theorist, but he appears to see literature as the expression of emotion and emotion as determined by the period: he is therefore a determinist, so far as literature is concerned, and what one might call an historical relativist, in spite of the fact that he does not really like the literature of the nineteenth century. Ransom is much more consistent, and, unlike Eliot, he endeavors to be consistent and to clarify his views, but his doctrine of imitation, from which he derives his doctrine of the logical core and the tissue of irrelevancies, appears to be merely one more homespun theory in defense of the associational techniques developed in the eighteenth century. Eliot, a spiritual descendant of Pound, and Tate, whose ideas derive in part from Ransom and in part from Eliot, are deeply involved in related principles.

Brooks offers a theory of ironical opposition, or paradox, as a theory of poetic structure, a theory to which R. S. Crane has made some very sound objections.[3] The worst difficulty with Brooks's method, as we see it in operation, is this: that any poem in which he can detect the ironical or paradoxical structure—and he can detect it almost anywhere—appears to him excellent, and nothing except this structure appears, in his opinion, to be involved in the art of poetry. The stylistic defects of *The Canonization*, of the *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, of the *Ode on the Inti-*

[3] See the following publications: *The Well-Wrought Urn*, by Cleanth Brooks, Reynal and Hitchcock, 1947; R. S. Crane: *Cleanth Brooks; or, The Bankruptcy of Critical Monism*, Modern Philology 45 (May 1948). This last, with modifications, is reprinted in *Critics and Criticism*, University of Chicago Press, 1952, an anthology of the Chicago Critics, edited by Crane. All references to Crane in this essay are to his contributions to this volume and to his *The Languages of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry*, University of Toronto Press, 1953.

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mations of Immortality, of *Among Schoolchildren*—and the defects in these poems are many and serious—do not exist for him. The defects in the themes of these poems become virtues of method. And one of these poems is as good as another, and, so far as one can tell, as good as any other. Like Crane, he seems to see poetry purely as structure—in Brooks it is a kind of balance between thematic opposites—and not as a definable method of understanding human experience and judging it. He is inferior to Crane for the reason that Crane points out: he is aware of only one principle of structure and that one inadequate. He is superior to Crane in this: that he makes a serious attempt to explore the possibilities of his principle in the analyses of a good many poems. Neither man seems to be aware that the primary function of criticism is evaluation, and that unless criticism succeeds in providing a usable system of evaluation it is worth very little.

Blackmur appears to be unwilling to commit himself to any principles, but feels that all principles should be used as methods of exploration.[4] One never feels sure why they should be used, since we do not know in reading Blackmur what we are looking for, and we suspect that he is looking only for what he may happen to turn up. He appears to be a relativist, and a relativist in criticism is of little help to anyone save himself, and one would like to reserve the right to be sceptical about even that. I may be unjust to Blackmur, however, for he has neglected the arts of syntax and of organization to the point that it is almost impossible to understand him.

Allen Tate, in his volume *Reason in Madness*,[5] has published four essays which have some bearing on what I have to say. In the order in which they appear in the book, they are: *The Present Function of Criticism, Literature as Knowledge, Tension in Poetry*, and *Miss Emily and the Bibliographers*. The first and last of these are essentially attacks upon the professors of English, particularly those in the graduate schools; *Literature as Knowledge* is mainly an attack upon the semanticists. Let me say at once that I think the attack upon the semanticists is a very effective piece of work, though I think that if Tate had not troubled himself some one

[4] See *A Critic's Job of Work*, in *Language as Gesture*, by R. P. Blackmur, Harcourt Brace and Company, 1952.

[5] *Reason in Madness*, by Allen Tate, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1941.

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else would have done the work for him—in fact the work might well have been done merely by the normal ravages of time. As to the professors whom he attacks, they are not an illusion: they are the professors who engage in "serious" literary study—bibliography, philology, textual criticism, and related disciplines—in order to lay the groundwork for criticism, and who not only hold criticism in contempt but do their best to suppress it in the universities. I, too, have known them. They are less numerous now than they were when Tate was writing these essays; and their number is diminishing. These men were fools, and where they still flourish they are still fools; and they have exerted a good deal of power in the past and doubtless still exert power in varying measures in various institutions. Yet even fifteen or twenty years ago they were a parody on the serious historical scholar, the scholar who engaged in factual investigation because the investigation was useful and his own real but limited talents lay in that direction. Tate gives the impression that his parody is the universal type, and this, I think, is unjust. It is, in fact, a blessing that the historical scholar has not as a rule engaged in criticism, for ordinarily he has no talent for it; and on the other hand Tate and I would both be far more ignorant men than we are if it had not been for his work: he has helped to educate us.

He has helped to educate us by doing his proper work, and we should help to educate him and his successors by doing ours, for the study of literature is extremely difficult, involves great and various ranges of learning, and will never be wholly mastered or clarified by any one man. Tate's final sentence in *The Present Function of Criticism* reads: "Literature is the complete knowledge of man's experience, and by knowledge I mean the unique and formed intelligence of the world of which man alone is capable." At the end of *Literature as Knowledge* he makes a similar statement. It is my contention that such a statement should have introduced an essay, and that the essay should then have explored the implications of the statement fully. Had Tate written such an essay, he would have been performing his proper function as a critic, a function which he blames the historical scholars for not having performed. Only once, so far as I can recollect, has Tate moved in the direction which I recommend, and neither I nor my ablest graduate students have succeeded in plotting the course of his motion.

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I refer to his essay entitled *Tension in Poetry*. In this essay he employs the word *tension* to include the meanings of its two derivatives: *extension* and *intension*. *Extension* means denotation; *intension* means connotation. The ideal tension in a poem would be a maximum content of both. But what is a maximum here? Is there any functional relationship between the one and the other, is any propriety of relationship involved? Tate does not say. Like Arnold before him, he gives us a handful of touchstones: passages of poetry which he likes, although he admits that some of them are not the greatest poetry, and which are notable mainly for the reason that they resemble each other in no very obvious way. If I were to come to this essay unprepared, I would suspect that Tate was indicating something like the relationship which I myself have endeavored to define between the motive (indicated most obviously in the denotative content of language) and the emotion (indicated most obviously in the connotative), and that he would demand a defensible relationship between the two. Yet Tate has told me in conversation that he regards my theory as indefensible philosophically, though useful as a tactical weapon. When I asked him to enlarge upon this statement, he declined. It is perhaps unfair to quote from conversation—in fact I am sure that it is—but this is a serious matter, and Tate has never given me any further satisfaction. If my breach of propriety stimulates Tate to an explanation, I shall be gratified and more than likely improved.

The leading figure in the Chicago group is R. S. Crane, and he is one of the few living critics who have endeavored to define any kind of critical method. It is impossible not to feel a good deal of sympathy for Crane: he is definitely a man at work. The central weakness in Crane's thought, however, is the same as that in the thought of so many of the others: a refusal to define any final cause for poetry other than the perfection of its own form—whatever that may mean. He sometimes appears to believe that there is, or sometimes may be, a relationship between poetry and moral judgment; more often he informs us that poetry, or at any rate poetic tragedy, gives us pleasure because it awakens and then allays strong emotions. But he does not pursue either topic. He does not tell us whether all poetry has moral value, or, if not, how some poetry differs from other poetry in this respect; nor does he tell us why strong emotions should be either awakened or

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allayed, nor what the relationship may be between either of these phenomena and any poetic technique. He offers no concept of propriety of emotion in a given context, or what I have called elsewhere a just relationship of emotion to motive, but seems to see the awakening of strong emotion as a good in itself, and he could thus be used effectively by the most irresponsible of romantic theorists. He insists on the importance of studying the various literary forms, their subdivisions and aspects, in order that we may understand the principles governing them, and in this I believe he is right. I believe furthermore that the pages in which he recommends this kind of study are among the most intelligent and persuasive of our time. Yet there seems to be no consistent awareness in his remarks that the most important end of such study would be the establishment of some kind of hierarchy of potentialities among the various forms, their subdivisions, and their elements; nor that the establishment of any such hierarchy would be impossible unless we had a clear idea of what the final cause of literature should be, so that we could evaluate the different forms in relationship to this cause; nor that we would have, in fact, no basis for saying that a given work was an admirable example of its kind, unless we could see the kind as a related division of the whole.

Yet back of his unwillingness to commit himself on this subject, there lurks an habitual and emotional commitment to the traditional order of forms: tragedy, epic, and lyric (with comedy, perhaps, tucked away in a footnote); and there lurks the undefended belief that "imitation," in the sense in which Crane derives this term from Aristotle, is the highest form of art. His derivation and definition of the term are sound, so far as my limited scholarship will permit me to judge. Yet nowhere does he tell us why imitation is important, except to say that it affords us a particular pleasure through awakening and allaying our emotions. If we were to tell him that we prefer to keep our emotions allayed from the beginning, there is nothing, I believe, in his system, which would provide him with the materials of an answer. At no point in his published works, so far as I can recollect, does he even make a comparison between the mimetic method and the expository method, with reference to their potentialities: there is the almost invariable assumption that the mimetic method is

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somehow the essentially poetic, and that other methods, though possible and defensible, are subsidiary.

This preference shows itself in his remarks on Gray's *Elegy*, remarks repeated in *The Languages of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry* from his earlier essay on Cleanth Brooks. He asks us to regard the *Elegy* as an "imitative lyric of moral choice rather than of action or of mood, representing a situation in which a virtuous, sensitive, and ambitious young man of undistinguished birth confronts the possibility of his death," and so on. Yet if I understand this account of the poem, we would have in Crane's terms a kind of dramatic monologue appropriate to the speaker and his peculiar combination of talent, education, defects, and the like; and we would know what kind of young man he was solely from the poem; and the poem would therefore be inescapably a perfect achievement, and criticism would be forestalled at the outset. Although Crane is a distinguished eighteenth-century scholar, and one with a fairly extensive knowledge of Renaissance and earlier thought, he fails to apply his knowledge. It does not occur to Crane that medieval and Renaissance poetry is formally rational and as often as not is formally logical in the technical sense;[6] that for well-known historical reasons this structure disintegrates rapidly in the eighteenth century; and that what we see in the *Elegy* is a meditation on death and on certain aspects of life, spoken not by an hypothetical young man dramatically rendered, but by Thomas Gray and to the best of his ability—a meditation in which we can see the rational structure of the great poets far gone in decay under the influence of associationism and Shaftesburian sentimentalism.[7] If we consider the poem in this light we can criticize it; we can evaluate it with reference to other and greater works. Crane puts it beyond the reach of criticism, just as he puts it outside of history.

But in spite of his elaborate defense of a study of the forms of poetry as forms, Crane does not explore any of the forms very far.

[6] See *Logic and Lyric*, by J. V. Cunningham, Modern Philology, Vol. LI, No. 1, Aug. 1953.

[7] For a very clear but brief account of associationism in the eighteenth century, see *John Keats' Fancy*, by J. R. Caldwell, Cornell University Press, Chapter Two. For a more detailed account, combined with an account of the influence of Shaftesbury and of allied matters, see *From Classic to Romantic*, by Walter Jackson Bate, Harvard University Press.

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He gives us a good account of the structure of tragedy as he derives it from Aristotle, with a few variations on the Aristotelian formula. What he says appears to me to be sound, but it is extremely general, and there are many problems of which he seems to be unaware, a few of which I shall indicate later in this essay. He gives a sound but very brief account of the plot of *Macbeth* as a variation on the Aristotelian formula. He has written an excellent study of the plot of *Tom Jones*, contained in *Critics and Criticism*: a workmanlike job on a simple subject. But the essay on *Tom Jones*, the few pages on *Macbeth*, and the remarks on the *Elegy* are about the extent of his practical criticism: as a critic, he is a scholarly amateur; he knows no more about criticism than Tate, Ransom, and their agrarian friends of twenty years ago knew about farming. He exhibits no knowledge of the structure or history of lyric poetry in English, and his few remarks on the subject make one suspect that he would write badly if he tried to write of it. He seems in brief to have come to poetry through an interest in criticism, rather than to criticism through an interest in poetry.

And this is a grave weakness. The poet, as poet, tries to write as well as possible. Every moment of his poetic life is thus concerned with exact and minute literary judgment, with evaluation, and he reads other poets as he reads himself, to discover what is really sound, to discover what might be improved, and in this way to improve his own intelligence and his own composition. If he has real poetic talent, reasonable scholarship, and the power of generalization, this interest may lead to the formulation of valid critical principles, more or less general and inclusive, depending on his intellectual powers. These principles may in turn free him from the tyranny of historical fashions (for we are determined by history only to the extent that we fail to understand it), may aid him to choose sounder themes and sounder methods of structure, and by virtue of these to achieve greater precision of detail. I am aware of no theoretical reason why a man not a poet should be unable to study poetry in the same way; I merely know of no such man who has done so. The professor, the learned but non-poetic critic, usually considers the exact evaluation of detail as somehow trivial, and hence his principles are vaguely conceived and often unsound, for the proof of a structure is in the quality of the details

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which it produces. One cannot study one aspect of poetry and achieve any really sound judgments. And, on the other hand, too many poets are unfortunately incapable of more than limited generalizations, or, having been caught in the anti-intellectual traditions of the past two hundred and fifty years, consider such generalizations unnecessary or somehow debasing. The problem of education involved in this difficulty is very great, but at least a beginning has been made in our time, and something may come of it. If all of this seems to be complicated, I can only say that the spiritual life is more arduous than even Saint Paul suspected, and we have only two possibilities from which to choose: we may endeavor to become intelligent, or we may continue to rest on our laurels—if that is what we are resting on.

Crane believes that nearly any critical method may have its uses, but he believes that certain methods may be more useful than others for certain problems (and he hints for most problems). But how does he determine which method or methods will be most useful in a given case? By pre-critical common sense. This pre-critical common sense would seem to have the balance of power in his system; if it is so important, one might think it the part of wisdom to study it and organize it into principles, yet Crane nowhere suggests this, nor does he define its nature or indicate its extent: it is simply a vague agent, of undefined power, operative at the beginning of any critical problem which we undertake. The pre-critical common sense of Crane will certainly differ from that of many critics whose methods Crane obviously dislikes, yet Crane is committed by theory to approve of their efforts, no matter how much he may dislike them in fact. If this is not relativism in theory, and irresponsible personal dogmatism in fact, it is hard to say what it is. And Crane sees criticism rather as descriptive than as evaluative, although he admits the possibility of ultimate judgments resulting from perception or taste.

One gets the impression from Crane and from his disciple Olson that works of one genre cannot be compared with works of another, yet nowhere are we told just where the impassable lines are to be drawn. Is it impossible merely to compare a lyric, say, with a tragedy? Or does the logical lyric as practiced by Wyatt and Nashe form an inviolable genre and the associationist lyric as practiced by Collins another? But if we can profitably compare

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for relative evaluation *In Time of Pestilence* with the *Ode to Evening*, why cannot we compare the possibilities of the lyrical forms with those of the tragedy? Such comparisons would seem to be the purpose of the study of the forms: to find out which forms offer the finest media, both in general and for particular purposes, and perhaps to modify certain forms where it is possible by drawing upon aspects of the others. Yet this kind of criticism is possible only if we have a clear idea of the function of literature in general, so that we may evaluate the forms in the light of that final cause, and Crane will recognize no such function, and he is interested in the forms chiefly, it would seem, for the purpose of keeping them distinct from each other—except where his unexamined preference for the mimetic principle tempts him to misapply it.

From these brief remarks on the leading critics of the past half-century, are we to judge that criticism and scholarship do not mix after all, or at least had better remain unmixed? The answer to this is that they *are* mixed, have always been mixed, and cannot be unmixed, and we had better hold what little we have gained and try to gain a little more. The "scientific" scholar who studies literature objectively as a record of the past is deluded. He is not studying all of the literature of the past, nor even of a single period. He devotes much more time, for example, to Milton than to Sir Richard Blackmore, and quite likely he has never read Blackmore. This fact indicates that a critical judgment has been made, either by the scholar or by his predecessors. In this case it may have been easy to make, and may have required no great talent; but every writer that the scholar studies comes to him as the result of a critical judgment, simple or multiple, and many of the problems may be more difficult, and in fact they are, and in fact many of the judgments have been wrong. Futhermore, it is hard to see how our scholar will be able to write the history of poetry, let us say, when he does not know what a poem is or how it functions: for this scholar the history of poetry will be a disjointed description of discrete phenomena, all of them seen through the haze of various misapprehensions.

III

I will endeavor to proceed.

During the past twenty years I have neglected a good many of

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the topics which Professor Crane says that every critic ought to consider, but I think that I have considered more of them than has Professor Crane. I have devoted myself mainly to what I think had better be called the short poem, to what Crane calls the lyric poem, and to what I have often called loosely and unfortunately by the same name. So far as I can recollect, I have written only four essays on novelists, but if this count is correct I am three ahead of Professor Crane. I have written no essays on the drama. In the course of my discussions of the short poem, I have made a good many references to the other forms of literature, where there seem to be principles cutting across the lines of the forms. Professor Crane seems to disapprove of my having done this, but he himself has done the same thing repeatedly. He disapproves of my distinction between poetry and prose, but he offers none of his own. My distinction is this: that poetry is written in verse and prose is not. It is a workable distinction, and I have written a good many pages to clarify the rather complicated ramifications of the distinction. So far as I can discover, Professor Crane includes under the heading of poetry everything that I have included under the heading of artistic literature—that is, literature which endeavors at one and the same time to clarify a subject rationally and to move the emotions appropriately—except that Professor Crane excludes what Aristotle calls works of rhetoric. I can understand the theoretical basis for this exclusion if we confine our attention to Aristotle, but I cannot help wondering how Professor Crane would use the distinction in practice. The influence of rhetorical treatises on Medieval and Renaissance prose and poetry of all kinds is so great that one can only describe it as pervasive, and almost every university of our time offers one or more seminars on the subject.

However, I have sinned. I have not dealt at length with the differences between the literary forms, any more than has anyone else in our time. Professor Crane is right in saying that some one ought to have done so. Furthermore, I will not deal at length with the various forms in the few years remaining to me, for there are still aspects of what I think the greatest of the forms which I wish to explore. But I would like to profit by Professor Crane's reproof and point out a certain number of problems which I think should be examined carefully by the next generation. After all, no single

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man will ever be able to finish this work, neither Professor Crane nor myself.

Let me repeat first of all the assumptions on which I invariably proceed as a critic. I believe that a poem (or other work of artistic literature) is a statement in words about a human experience. I use the term *statement* in a very inclusive sense, and for lack of something better. But it seems to me obvious that *The Iliad, Macbeth,* and *To the Virgins to Make Much of Time* all deal with human experiences. In each work there is a content which is rationally apprehensible, and each work endeavors to communicate the emotion which is appropriate to the rational apprehension of the subject. The work is thus a judgment, rational and emotional, of the experience—that is a complete moral judgment in so far as the work is successful. I see no escape from these opinions, any more than I can see an escape from the opinion that poetry is written in verse and prose in prose, although I am fully aware that I am far more simple-minded than nearly all of my contemporaries. I am perhaps guilty here of an act of faith; but it seems to me of the same order as that act of faith by which I believe that I am. Without one or two fundamental acts of faith, or appeals to experience, we can scarcely begin to converse. And I do not believe that the act of faith in question is really very arbitrary. After all, what is *Macbeth* or *To the Virgins*?

If we can grant as much as this, we can proceed to certain additional admissions. We may admit, with Professor Crane, that *Macbeth* is a tragedy and *To the Virgins* is a lyric; and we may as well agree with Professor Crane about the nature of tragedy in general and of *Macbeth* in particular, but I think that we had better be careful about agreeing with Professor Crane whenever he writes of the lyric.

Our experience with the poetry already written would seem to indicate this: that we regard as greatest those works which deal with experiences which affect human life most profoundly, and this criterion is not merely one of the intensity of the experience but of the generality or inclusiveness of the implications. In making this statement, I am assuming, of course, that the works in question are sufficiently successful in execution so that execution may be more or less neglected in the comparison. Execution can never be neglected, however, in our judgment of the indi-

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vidual works: a work which is poorly executed is bad, no matter what the conception; a form, or a sub-form, which enforces any kind of inferior writing is an inferior form, unless it can be shown that it permits greater generalization than any form which permits better writing—and then we shall have to strike a balance between the virtues and defects of the forms.

But let me illustrate what I have just said about subject matter, with reference to two tragedies, *Macbeth* and *Phèdre*. Of the two plays, *Phèdre* is certainly the better executed; in fact, so far as execution is concerned, it comes very close to perfection, within the limits permitted by its particular form, but of this I shall say more later. As regards the subject, however, we may say this: when the play opens, Phèdre is already overpowered by a passion not merely illicit but incestuous, and this passion is not of her own choosing, but in her opinion is the result of the arbitrary malice of Venus. In her great climactic speeches, she expresses awareness of her sin, it is true, but she sees herself as helpless, and the speeches are expressions of suffering only, and almost of self-pity.

Macbeth, however, is a far more complex agent. His speech at the beginning of I-vii, in which he contemplates the murder of Duncan before committing it, shows that he has a theoretic understanding of the nature and consequences of such an act, even though he seems as yet to have no imaginative realization of them. The realization comes after the act, and becomes more intense as the play proceeds; the evidence of the realization is to be found in four or five speeches by Macbeth at important points in the action, the last and most moving being the speech beginning "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow" in V-vi, which follows immediately upon Macbeth's two lines of comment on his queen's death. This speech, if taken out of context, may appear to refer to the tedium of time, and I dare say appears so to many casual readers of the play. But it is far from referring merely to that. Macbeth has murdered Duncan, Banquo, and the family of Macduff; and he has murdered sleep. But he has murdered more than that, and he knows it—knows it not merely in theory, now, but in fact: he has murdered his own soul. This is the speech of a man who sees himself as a walking dead man, to whom his own life has lost all meaning. These speeches, in which the general implications of Macbeth's sin are indicated, give greater precision

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to our understanding of the sin and give greater scope to the play: the play is not merely an account of the tragic consequences of a particular irrational passion, as is *Phèdre*; it is an account of the tragic consequences of irrational passion. It is thus the greater play.

IV

With these general principles in mind, let us proceed to certain problems in the judgment of narrative, whether prose or verse. The problems of subject-matter in these forms will be common to the drama as well.

In his volume *Woe or Wonder*, a collection of essays on Shakespeare, J. V. Cunningham includes an essay entitled *The Donatan Tradition*.[8] Cunningham's prose is extremely concise, and it would be folly to try to summarize it. I shall therefore merely mention two points which Cunningham makes in this essay, and I shall indulge myself in a few meditations in connection with these two matters, meditations of which Cunningham will doubtless disapprove.

As to the first of these, I shall quote briefly. Cunningham, in summarizing certain of the views of Donatus on tragedy, says:

> The first distinction is that the tragic characters must be great, and this means of high rank. It is the modern feeling that this is an artificial stipulation, explicable only in the erroneous social ideas of our ancestors. But *The Death of a Salesman* is not a tragedy in the old sense, and so one might conjecture that there is something else involved: there is involved a radical difference in the nature of the tragic effect. For the field of tragedy will be the state, since men of high rank will be the rulers of the state. Tragedy will then involve not private life and private feeling—this is the province of comedy—, but public life and public feeling. But public feeling is different in kind from private. A public calamity moves us in a different way than does a private one. The murder of John Doe is one thing; the assassination of Trotsky or of Admiral Darlan is another. Hence the tragic emotions in the older tradition will be predominantly communal and public, and we will find that a similar qualification is implied in the other principles of order which Donatus distinguishes.

This principle seems to me sound, and it is operative in all of the

[8] *Woe or Wonder: The Emotional Effect of Shakespearian Tragedy* by J. V. Cunningham, the University of Denver Press, 1951.

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great tragedies of Shakespeare; yet it is worth noting that it is less obviously operative in *Othello* than in the others, and after *Macbeth* and *Hamlet, Othello* is probably the best of them.

The second point which I wish to repeat from Cunningham, or rather by way of Cunningham from Donatus, is this: "that the plot of tragedy is commonly historical and true, not feigned . . . it has . . . the compelling absoluteness of accomplished fact. Hence its effect will be accompanied by the recognition that things could not be otherwise, since this is how in fact they were." These are two of the characteristics which differentiate tragedy from comedy, in which "the story is always made up . . . the characters are of moderate estate, the difficulties that arise are slight, and the outcome of it all is joyful." These are essential differences, briefly, between a major and a minor form.

Of the two requirements of tragic writing just indicated, historiographers, more than any other writers of prose narrative, can perhaps most easily avail themselves. Biography, in this connection, should be regarded as a branch of historiography, for the two are frequently hard to distinguish. The historical novelist might also profit by these possibilities if he had the wit to see the advantages. Macaulay's account of Monmouth's rebellion, in Chapter V of the *History of England,* is a relatively short example. Both Monmouth and James II were mediocre men, at the most charitable estimate, and had either been born into a mediocre estate he would probably at most have provided the material for comedy and James for low comedy. But James was the king of England, and Monmouth aspired to be king. Their actions involved the fate of England; they were public actions, not private; and they really happened. Macaulay's prose is in the heroic tradition, yet is capable of irony; it is rapid, exact, flexible, and deeply moving; the paragraphs dealing with the execution and burial of Monmouth have a grandeur almost equal to that of great Shakespearian verse. It will be almost impossible to match this prose in the works of the English and American novelists; Melville alone, and only at his best, is comparable. One could cite other examples from Macaulay and from other historians, but this one example will have to suffice. The point which I wish to make is this: that Macaulay had a great subject and hence was able to

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write great prose. He had the talent for great prose, of course, but he could not have exercised it without the subject. An important part of his talent lay in his ability to find the subject.

Let us consider the subject of *The Age of Innocence*, by Edith Wharton. The setting is in the aristocratic society of New York, in the 1870's, a period in which the society had lost its religious convictions and its moral ideas but still retained its moral habits, the habits being embodied for the most part in social forms. For most of the members of the society these forms were merely forms, although they were respected with a kind of frozen gentility which had replaced the earlier religious beliefs. The two principal characters, Newland Archer and Ellen Olenska, understand both the virtues and the superficialities of this society, and so does Mrs. Wharton. Archer and Ellen decide not to elope, in part because of their realization of these virtues, in part because of mere social pressure, and to the extent that the second cause is operative the moral strength of the book is attenuated. The book is not a tragedy in the Elizabethan sense, but neither is it a comedy, although it contains comic materials. The central characters surrender a private good in the interests of a public good, however frail and far gone in decay the latter may be; in a small and gentle way they give up life to gain life. In these respects the book is serious, and the prose is adequate to the materials. But the question of whether or not Newland Archer shall elope with his wife's cousin is an extremely private and particular question. We do not have a great subject, and since Mrs. Wharton had critical tact, she did not try to write great prose: the prose is precise, perceptive, and intelligent, but it is not great. In *The Writing of Fiction* Mrs. Wharton warns the prospective fictionist of the danger inherent in subjects which are too great for his power; there is a trace of melancholy in her warning, as if she were thinking of herself. I have always had the feeling that if she had chosen to write a novel on the life of Woodrow Wilson, she would have constructed her plot from the incident of his second marriage.

Is the character of high estate essential to the serious subject, however? I suspect that the chief virtue of this kind of character lies in his power to generalize the subject, to extend its significance beyond the limits of particular experience, and although it may well be that the greatest possible generalization is impos-

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sible without this kind of character, yet this kind of character is obviously not the only means to such generalization. *Macbeth* and *Phèdre* both employ such characters, and both fulfill the traditional requirements for tragedy; yet *Macbeth*, as I have tried to show, is the more generalized of the two, and for a reason irrelevant to this one. There might well be tragic possibilities in the predicament of the German and other European professors who refused to betray the principles of scholarship at the insistence of the Nazi government; they were not of high estate in the technical sense, but they were at least in conflict with those who were, and—what might prove to be more important—they represented something greater than the State and were conscious of the fact. It is possible that the labor leaders of fifty or sixty years ago might have a measure of the same power. Frank Norris, in *The Octopus*, had characters and a situation, which, though more restricted than those of *Macbeth*, might yet have resulted in a greater novel than *The Age of Innocence* had he possessed the ability to understand them and sufficient education to write literate prose.

Such power as Hawthorne achieves in *The Scarlet Letter* is due to the fact that his characters are the allegorical embodiment of a religious view of human experience which really existed in the society which he depicts, and of course the clergy were persons of high estate in that small society. I confess that I find the allegorical significance of the book more ambiguous now than I found it many years ago, and the prose less admirable; but, as novels go, it is one of the most impressive, and its generalizing power is the principal reason. Much of its power, moreover, resides in undisguised analysis by the author, the kind of analysis that we might expect to find in an historian or biographer, and which modern novelists have in the main tried to avoid as somehow reprehensible.

Melville stresses the absolute power of Ahab on board the Pequod, and compares him to ancient kings, but he perhaps overdoes it, and the effectiveness of Ahab in the story has more important causes. Captain Vere, in *Billy Budd*, is a sea captain, but he is a captain of a naval vessel in a period of national emergency, and so is in a far more serious manner than Ahab a man of high estate, and the matter needs no great emphasis: the situation in which he finds himself makes him the representative and

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guardian of the social order, and consequently he becomes the embodiment of the critical intelligence. In *Benito Cereno* we have two sea captains in remote waters. In this book the Negroes are the embodiment of evil, evil which (by implication) is the result of injustice, and Babo is the representative Negro: Babo's head, at the end of the story, is almost the symbol of the inscrutable and incurable evil of the universe which had obsessed Melville through so many books. Cereno is the civilized mind which, failing to recognize evil in time, is broken by it and at the same time instructed. Delano is the sentimental optimist, the good-natured man, who sees all and understands nothing, and who is rescued partly by chance and partly by the sudden decision of the educated but broken Cereno. Both works employ the method of undisguised exposition and with great effect; the method is used more sparingly but more expertly in *Benito Cereno*. *Billy Budd* appears to be the unfinished draft of a great work. *Benito Cereno* is the most successfully written of Melville's works, and with *Moby Dick* is one of the greatest. It is deserving of careful study, I believe, for its methods and for the kinds of prose which it contains.

I hope that I may be forgiven if I devote a paragraph to a book by my wife, Janet Lewis, for the book has a certain interest in connection with the matters which I have been discussing. It is a novelette, entitled *The Wife of Martin Guerre*.[9] It is an historical novel: not only did the events really occur, but they constitute the materials of one of the more famous cases in the history of French law. The characters are not of high estate, absolutely considered, but in their own eyes their estate is anything but contemptible. They were wealthy peasants, of old peasant families, living in the south of France in the sixteenth century. Such peasants were proud of their families, of the antiquity of their families, and of the stability of the social order of which they were a part; and the events of the story threatened the social order with at least a measure of disruption. The peasants were Catholics, and their religious and moral ideas were definite and firmly held.

[9] *The Wife of Martin Guerre*, by Janet Lewis, The Colt Press, 1941; reissued in *The Anchor in the Sea*, edited by Alan Swallow, The Swallow Press and William Morrow and Company, 1947; reissued as a separate book by Alan Swallow, Denver, 1950; translated into French by Françoise O. Jobit and published as *La Femme de Martin Guerre*, by Robert Laffont, Paris, 1947.

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The action of the story occurs as the result of an arbitrary act on the part of a young man who is the son of a tyrannical father. The young man has offended his father, leaves his young wife, goes off to the wars, and delays his return even after his father has been long dead. A wandering rogue who bears a close resemblance to Martin Guerre hears of the situation, studies the facts of the family history and organization, replaces the husband, and lives as Martin Guerre for several years, deceiving a large family and many old servants. The wife finally suspects him, and with difficulty convinces her uncle, and the uncle brings the case to trial. The impostor is acquitted; there is an appeal and he is about to be acquitted, when Martin Guerre enters the court room. The impostor has behaved like a gentleman except for his initial sin, and has loved the lady and caused her to love him. He is sentenced to execution; Martin Guerre disowns his wife and leaves the court room. The story begins in error, proceeds to deception, is clarified by the person who must suffer most for the clarification, and ends in death: religion, morality, and the social order are the governing principles, and most of the later action takes place in the court room. This is, I suppose, as much a matter of public emotion as of private—nearly as much a matter of public emotion, let us say, as we have in *Othello*. In style, the book relies heavily on the techniques of expository summary and explanation employed by the historian, and part of its rapidity of movement is due to this reliance; certain important portions of the action are expanded into scenes, in the manner of the novelist, but the expansion is subdued to the effect of the whole. We have here, with the one qualification which I have mentioned, the principal elements of tragedy. It is my own opinion that the prose is adequate to the subject; but even if I should be misled by prejudice in this judgment, it seems to me certain that the book deserves study as an example of method.

In this portion of my essay I began to talk about the materials of prose narrative, but I was led almost inescapably into some discussion of the more traditional methods of narration. I would like to say something now about certain innovations in method which have been made in our century.

I agree with Professor Crane that every drama and novel should have a plot and that the plot should be well constructed; as a

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matter of fact an enormous number of such works do have such plots, but these virtues are often insufficient to overcome the limitations of the materials from which the plots are constructed and the limitations imposed by theories regarding the proper manner of revealing or developing plots. It is an easy matter to dissect the plot out of *Macbeth,* pronounce it good, and remark casually with Professor Crane that the virtues of character and diction depend upon the plot. Of course they do, but they might have been better and they might have been a great deal worse, and we would like to know why.

Professor Crane expresses briefly but emphatically an admiration for the plotting of Henry James. In this admiration he is one of a multitude, and I am another of the same multitude. But the materials of Henry James are very similar to the materials of Edith Wharton, and as I have pointed out in my essay on James, the author's understanding of them is even more severely limited than that of Edith Wharton through his failure to understand the social order from which his characters arose. And this is not the worst. James held, in his latter years, a theory regarding the development of his plot which had a considerable bearing on his procedure: he believed that the omniscient author, the historical explicator, should disappear, and that the reader should proceed through the novel by way of the minds of his characters. So far as James's procedure in the later novels was concerned, this meant that we should become one with Lambert Strether from beginning to end of *The Ambassadors.* We are born with Strether into Paris in Strether's fifty-fifth or fifty-sixth year, we pick up fragments of his past history as his mind happens to touch on it, we become aware fragmentarily of Paris and of people in Paris as Strether sees them or thinks of them for a few moments here and there; and little by little—in the manner of Strether—we form conclusions, which are replaced by other conclusions, and so on. The prose generated by this method is almost as impressionistic and fragmentary as possible. Even if we have read the book within a very few years we cannot pick it up and start the fifth or fifteenth or twentieth chapter and read with any comprehension. The virtues of narrative prose have been abandoned: narrative is present only in the total structure. The virtues of expository prose have been abandoned: we

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must construct our own exposition of the story when the story has been completed; and as I have pointed out in my essay on James, the author's intentions as to what our construction should be are anything but clear, for he seems to have become lost among his own perceptions. We have, in brief, a plot, if we can determine precisely what it is, and this is no small task; and we have a diffuse and confusing prose, of one kind only. And throughout the book we are forced to consider much more seriously than they merit the fragmentary details of sensory and emotional perception. The damage done by this procedure simply to the art of prose is enormous, and, as I have said in my essay on James, if the perfection of the art of the novel results in damage to the art of prose, then there is something wrong with the novel. Actually, I believe that the trouble is not with the novel but is rather with the particular kind of novel which James was trying to write.

Furthermore, this is no merely personal difficulty of my own. In Volume 22, Number 3, of *American Literature*, there appears a paper by Robert E. Young, entitled *An Error in the Ambassadors*. This paper demonstrates to a certainty that Chapters XXVIII and XXIX of *The Ambassadors* are printed in reverse order, and that James himself in revising the work for the New York Edition did not correct the error, although he altered many details of style within these chapters. Young gives a reasonably convincing account of the manner in which the error probably occurred; but the error could not have occurred and James could not have failed to detect it, had it not been for the peculiar diffuseness and obscurity of the prose. Young, when he wrote this paper, was a third-year undergraduate at Stanford, and the paper was written for my course in the American novelists (English 265). Young was nineteen years old. He was preparing for the study of law, and after leaving Stanford he entered a large eastern law school, and I am sure that he will be a good lawyer, and I wish him well in spite of the embarrassment which he caused me. I had not observed the blunder over a period of about fifteen years of teaching James, and my best students had not observed it. Young's paper caused quite a flurry among my graduate students at the time: they heard the theory with contempt and verified it with humility. A few months after Young's paper was published, a gentleman whose name I have forgotten replied to it in the same

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journal. His point was this: that the error had been corrected in an English edition of the novel which has long been out of print and which is practically unobtainable, and that for this reason Young was no scholar. This gentleman was obviously a scholar of the old school: he had got hold of a fact and was bound to make the most of it, but he didn't know what it meant. What the fact meant was this: that the person who had made the correction in the English edition had caught the error and that no one else had noticed it until Young came along—that no one, in fact, had even noticed the correction, for every edition of *The Ambassadors* now in print repeats the error.[10] Young's point was that the error should not have occurred, that, once it had occurred, it should not have been so hard to detect, and, if it was so hard to detect, that there was a flaw in the author's method. It should be remembered that James thought *The Ambassadors* his finest piece of work, as regards both construction and style.

I have used James to illustrate one way only in which a theory of construction may affect the art of prose. Of James I think that we may safely say this: that he is the greatest master in our literature of the most limited kind of narrative matter combined with the most unsound narrative technique antedating Joyce, Miss Richardson, and Mrs. Woolf; and in our time this is no small achievement, but I would hope for better. In the later Joyce, in Miss Richardson, and in Mrs. Woolf, plot, in various ways and degrees, has become less important; the particular detail and the progression from detail to detail by pure association have largely taken charge of the novel. The clear perception of the detail, a clarity of perception so acute that it seems to imply undefined significance, that is, Joyce's epiphany or Pound's image or ideogram, has become the essence of great writing. In an old essay on Joyce, Edmund Wilson writes as follows: "If Flaubert taught Maupassant to look for the definitive adjectives which would distinguish a given cab-driver from every other cab-driver at the Rouen station, so Joyce has set himself the task of finding the precise dialect which will distinguish the thoughts of a given

[10] I have recently received an advertising circular from the College Department of Harper and Brothers which announces a new edition of *The Ambassadors*, in which the reversed chapters will be put back in their proper order. The correction is attributed to the two articles which I have mentioned.

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Dubliner from those of every other Dubliner."[11] Let me say this: that my own interest in this kind of particularity is mild indeed, for the world is teeming with such particularity, and as we grow older we become less interested in details and more interested in such conclusions as can be drawn from details; and conversely our interest in details becomes more and more concentrated on those details from which conclusions may be drawn or which contain important conclusions implicit within them. I do not deny the virtues of accurate writing, but I insist that accuracy of detail should be subordinate to an important end, and in these writers, I think, the importance of the end is at a minimum.

In these three writers and in the later James we have an art which is mimetic in a particular sense: the author endeavors to imitate the processes by which he believes that people really think. It is true that much thought proceeds by way of sensory perception and association, but this is only one kind of thought, and it is thought at the most elementary level. There are other ways of thinking, as one can discover, for example, by reading Plato or Macaulay's history. But many of our novelists have decided that the thought of the conscious author is somehow unworthy of the serious author, and should be eliminated; that the fragmentary and unguided thought of the character, as he walks down the street, or sits in a bar, or dreams at night, should be imitated as closely as possible. I confess that I find such imitation dull, even when it is done by Joyce. I prefer the complete thought of the great mind, and the structure which is proper to such thought, and I cannot see that Joyce offers much in return for what he eliminates. If this is the novel, we pay too high a price for it.

I should like to mention one other technique which for a number of years in our century was widely used: the technique of narration by retrospection, or the extended flashback. Jonathan Colgate, in late middle age, stands at his study window and looks out upon the autumnal scene; the sky is overcast; the leaves fall; and he is melancholy as he considers the many frustrations of his life. His mind goes back to the beginnings and wanders toward the present, and on page 400 we finally understand all of the

[11] The essay appears in *Axel's Castle* (1931), and is reprinted in *Literary Opinion in America*, edited by M. D. Zabel (revised edition), 1951.

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reasons for his depression. The state of mind appropriate to the conclusion has hung evenly over the entire narrative, in the manner of what Californians would call a high fog. The narrative proceeds largely by association: that is, the reader must piece it together from Judge Colgate's thoughts. The state of emotion is given at the beginning, and therefore is given in loose terms; it is explained more or less at the end; but there is no exact relationship from page to page between the narrative so far as developed and the emotion appropriate to this development—that is, there is no precision in the language, but there is rather a vague narrative technique combined with a vague emotionalism, and this combination breeds the cliché, the pseudo-poetic phrase, as dead water breeds mosquitoes. Ellen Glasgow employed this technique with all its consequences, to infinite tedium, and others have done the same.

I have not exhausted the methods of modern fiction in these few paragraphs, nor have I analyzed exhaustively the methods I have mentioned: that has not been my purpose, and I will leave that work for others. I have merely tried to indicate a few of the critical problems before us, and by indicating those few to indicate the kind of critical problem that must be explored if the novel is to survive. For the fact of the matter is, as most intelligent critics and even novelists are aware, that the novel in our time is nearly dead. Unless there is a serious reconsideration of materials and methods, not merely in the interests of what may seem to the uninstructed to be novelty, but in the interests of intelligent achievement, the next generation will see the novel as dead as the drama is now. The most damnable fact about most novelists, I suppose, is their simple lack of intelligence: the fact that they seem to consider themselves professional writers and hence justified in being amateur intellectuals. They do not find it necessary, so far as one can judge, to study the other forms of literature, or even forms of the novel other than those they practice; they do not find it necessary to think like mature men and women or to study the history of thought; they do not find it necessary to master the art of prose. And these remarks are equally true, so far as my experience goes, of those novelists who write primarily for profit, and who boast of being able "to tell a good story," and of those who are fiddling with outmoded experimental procedures in the interests of originality and who are sometimes praised in the

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quarterlies. In fact the history of the novel is littered with the remains of genius sacrificed to ignorance and haste. I can read the later Joyce and Mrs. Woolf in small passages, for the details are often entertaining, even though their function may be trivial. But I cannot read the neat but simple Mr. Hemingway, nor the inarticulate (though doubtless profound) Mr. Faulkner, and I can see no reason why I should be asked to try. I am a student of literature, not an anthropologist, and I have better ways of spending the few years remaining to me.

V

I would like to turn to epic proper and the allegorical epic.

As I have said, I believe that the difference between poetry and prose is verse. There may be great poetry and great prose, but the medium imposes certain differences, in spite of the fact that Professor Crane has not noticed these. But the narrative arts have much in common which cuts across this division, and it may be worth our trouble to consider the effects of the division on the common elements.

Verse is metric or measured language. The measure controls the rhythm, and provides precision of rhythm. The resulting rhythm is more expressive of emotion than is the relatively loose rhythm of prose. That is, verse can express a stronger emotion than prose, and, within the limits proper to it, can express emotion more precisely than prose, even if the emotion is not strong. But it has a different range of emotion than that of prose: the total range of verse is higher, although the two ranges overlap perhaps half of the time. Thus there are subjects which verse can treat with greater power than prose; there are many subjects which verse can treat with greater precision than prose; but there are many subjects which prose can treat with propriety and which verse cannot treat without a somewhat embarrassing exaggeration. The problem with any particular work in hand is to decide which of the two mediums will be more effective the greater part of the time and in general: the decision may be far from an easy one, but one should never forget that the power of truly great prose is far from contemptible—the fact is, that truly great prose is great, although we have not seen much prose of this kind in the past one hundred years.

Neither *The Age of Innocence* nor *The Ambassadors* could

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have been written successfully in verse, for the subjects are too slight and both works are too dependent upon a great number of particulars, which, though no doubt necessary to the whole, are too trivial individually to bear the emphasis which verse would give them. Macaulay's *History of England* is one of the greatest masterpieces of English prose, but the work is history and the bulk of factual material is large: details concerning the economic and social life of England in the late seventeenth century, of parliamentary debates, of political and military maneuvering, of theological argument, of ecclesiastical rivalries, and of private scandals. If we regard historiography as a literary form, or rather as a group of literary forms, and I think we should, such details are appropriate to the medium, and we should not wish to dispense with them; furthermore, since we are gentlemen and scholars, we find these details interesting in themselves—they are a part of history. As bare facts they are far more interesting than Lambert Strether's subtle and more or less mistaken ruminations on the altered character of Chad Newsome. But they would never do in verse; they are material for prose.

Now the epic, as we know it in Homer, in *The Song of Roland*, and in *The Cid*, is among other things a kind of primitive history. It does not carry as much historical detail and explanation as do our later histories, for its readers—or listeners—did not require this and the poets had no access to such materials even if they had wanted them, but it carries a great deal of detail notwithstanding, and much of this material is only imperfectly fitted to verse. Furthermore, much of it is only imperfectly fitted to interest the civilized mind, except as the civilized mind may choose to engage in an act of historical—or perhaps we should say anthropological—imagination. There is no harm in such an act provided we know what we are doing, but if we cultivate our imagination too much and understand it too little, we may come to believe that *The Song of Roland* is as great a work as the *History of England*, if we are thinking about histories and epics, or, since it is a poem, an epic, and the national epic of France, that it is a greater work than such and such a short poem, let us say *Le Cimetière Marin*; and it is certainly far inferior to either of these.

The heroic treatment of the prize-fight, of the Cid's defrauding of the Jews, of the thick-headed hero's sulking in his tent, or of

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the idiocy which caused Roland to lose the rear guard, and of many comparable incidents, we could not put up with in the work of a modern, and the reason is not so simple as a mere change of taste. A change of taste has occurred, but it is a change from the primitive to the civilized, from the childish to the adult, and this is true no matter what incidental virtues the primitive poets may have had nor how many of those virtues we may have lost. It would seem the part of wisdom to value such works as historical data and for such great poetry as we may find scattered through them, but not to over-rate them. For in over-rating them we do injustice to greater works and we cloud our own understanding. My ignorance of Greek prevents my forming an opinion of individual passages in Homer, though I am willing to believe that there are many which are great; but the total action and the details of the action are simply incapable of resulting in a great work. I can read Old French and Old Spanish well enough, and I have read the *Aeneid* in Latin, though I am no great Latinist. There are passages in the *Aeneid*, *The Cid*, and the *Roland* which I find very moving, but the general objections to these works are not altered by such passages. The question of whether the *Aeneid* suffers by virtue of being an imitation of primitive models, written in a sophisticated age, of whether or not there is a kind of genteel and corrosive condescension in Virgil's manner of writing, I shall have to leave to more expert Latinists than myself.

Paradise Lost differs in some ways from the poems I have mentioned, but most of the differences are superficial. Basil Willey, in his *Seventeenth Century Background*, gives an admirable account of the difficulties faced by Milton in attempting to compose such a poem at such a time, and it is clear that Willey does not believe that Milton overcame many of the difficulties, and in this I agree with him. The work, as everyone knows, contains a large amount of admirable poetry and some very great poetry, but the very conception in which it was cast makes it a failure as a whole if we apply to it the same standards that we would apply to an effort by ourselves. In *Paradise Lost* we have a more heightened emotional norm than we shall find elsewhere: the sentence, rhythm, and diction require a much greater uniformity of grandeur in the material than do any others in English poetry; and the grandeur is only now and then evident, and when it is lacking

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we have grandiloquence. A good many years ago I found Milton's procedure more nearly defensible than I find it now; I find now that I grow extremely tired of the meaningless inflation, the tedious falsification of the materials by way of excessive emotion. Milton has one problem, for example, which involves an interesting variant on the Homeric method. In Homer the gods are more human than divine, and although we may find them primitive in conception, nevertheless they are not supposed to be much more intelligent than Achilles and they mingle in his affairs rather naturally. Milton, however, is concerned with a deity and with additional supernatural agents who are conceived in extremely intellectual terms: our conceptions of them are the result of more than two thousand years of the most profound and complex intellectual activity in the history of the human race. Milton's form is such that he must first reduce these beings to something much nearer the form of the Homeric gods than their proper form, and must then treat his ridiculously degraded beings in heroic language. Most of the consequent blunders, I suppose, have been noted by other writers, but they are still there: the use of cannon in the angelic war, the preposterous, cloudy, and tedious, but extremely circumstantial details of the highway from Hell, and above all, perhaps, the disquisition addressed by God the Father to God the Son in Book III, as if the Son had any need of the Father's protracted and discursive reasoning. And of course there are others. Milton did not derive this kind of detail from Revelation. He derived these details from his own laborious imagination and from his laborious struggle with intractable material and an unmanageable form. It will not do to say that these details are necessary parts of a great whole, and that we should therefore accept them. They are necessary parts of the whole, it is true, but the fact of their necessity points to the fact that the whole is not great: they are the visible evidence of the flaw in the conception. And although the poem contains a good deal of great poetry, and poetry which I trust that we shall always retain and read with high regard, yet this is not enough to justify our regarding the total work as a success. It requires more than a willing suspension of disbelief to read most of Milton; it requires a willing suspension of intelligence.

There is also the allegorical poem, which arose in the Middle

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Ages, and which was expanded to epical dimensions by Dante and Spenser.

The defects of the method are more easily seen in Spenser, since he is by far the less talented of the two poets. We may consider the dragon in the first canto of *The Fairy Queen*. The gentle knight encounters the dragon, and after many Spenserian stanzas he slays it. We eventually learn that the dragon represents Error. But the dragon in general and in all its details, and merely as a dragon, is a very dull affair; it is poorly described and poorly characterized. I do not, frankly, know what one might do to make a dragon more interesting, but it seems to me that unless one can do better than this one had better not use a dragon. In its capacity as Error, the dragon spews up a number of books and papers (along with other items), and of course the dragon is ugly, but little is done in this way to further our understanding of error: there is no functional relationship between the dragon, either in general or in detail, and that which it represents. The relationship is arbitrary, and we have to be told explicitly what the relationship is. In this example we are told in the text, though late in the incident; if we were not told in the text we would have to have it explained in a summary. The gentle knight himself suffers from exactly the same defects as the dragon, and to understand him and his actions we have to read him with a chart at our elbow, and even then the significance remains on the chart and is never functional in the poem. The poem has other defects: the clumsy and tyrannical stanza, the primitive and unvaried use of the iambic pentameter line, and an habitual redundancy; but at present I am concerned only with the incurable flaws in the method.

Dante is free of the incidental faults which I have just mentioned. In fact the corresponding virtues in Dante are striking. But much the same difficulties inhere in the form of *The Divine Comedy*. Too many of the allegorical spirits, demons, ascents, descents, gates, animals, and monsters have only the most arbitrary relationship to that which they represent, and it would be next to impossible to determine a good many of the relationships without help. The preposterous demons in Canto XXI of *The Inferno* represent evil in a general way, and they are described as irrational, unpredictable, and malicious, but most of the description is de-

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voted to their physical ugliness, so that we merely get an extensive development of the obvious. The description, in fact, is little better than Spenser's description of the dragon, with these exceptions: that Dante is not hampered by Spenser's massively clumsy stanza, and he is a far more sophisticated master of the rhythm of the line, and of the relationship of syntax to rhythm, line, and stanza, with the result that his description is more compact and gives us the impression of movement rather than of lethargy. The vision of Dis in the final canto of *The Inferno* is even more grotesque than the account of the demons in XXI, and has the same defect.

I will illustrate the problem with a very brief example, an example which, though minor in itself, is characteristic of the method. Near the beginning of Canto I of *The Inferno*, Dante encounters three beasts, a panther, a lion, and a wolf, and we are informed in a footnote in Tozer's translation that these represent the vices of lust, pride, and avarice. In Tozer's translation, the panther (lust) appears as follows:

> . . . . just where the steep ascent commenced, a panther appeared, supple and exceedingly nimble, which was covered with spotted fur; nay so greatly did it impede my progress that once and again I turned me to retreat.

The panther as such is charming, and he is naturally more charming in the Italian than in the prose translation. But he is a very mild embodiment of lust; in fact there is nothing in the description of the panther which relates him to lust. I am aware of the somewhat vague mythological association, but that is not sufficient: the subject here is the sin of lust, and nothing has been said about it. There is no philosophical understanding, no psychological insight. The panther could just as easily represent procrastination, or absent-mindedness. The fault is the fault of the method—when Dante is not hampered by the method, as in some of his more direct accounts of human character, he often displays the virtues which he lacks here—but the method accounts for the total structure and for the greater part of the detail.

The epic and the allegory as I have described them will never, I think, be revived. It is not that we have lost the high intelligence of Dante or of Milton. I think in fact that we have lost certain important parts of it, but those are perhaps recoverable. The

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reason is that we have lost the literary innocence which made it possible for men of such extraordinary gifts to be satisfied with such unsatisfactory methods.

Since Milton there have been only two attempts at anything bearing any resemblance to epic by writers of real ability: *Moby Dick,* and the *Cantos* of Ezra Pound. Melville used materials, characters, and states of mind more diverse than one can find in any of these works, and although I have not devised any accurate and rapid method of measurement, I suspect that the bulk of his work exceeds the bulk of any of them, save possibly that of *The Fairy Queen.* He substituted prose for verse, and hence freed himself from the tyrannic overemphasis of materials proper only to prose. But after he had freed himself from the tyranny he often submitted to it: much of the writing is inflated even in the absence of any need for inflation. The prose often recalls, though most of the time it surpasses, the prose of the nineteenth-century translations of epic poetry; it sometimes recalls the prose of Shakespeare or even his verse; it sometimes recalls the prose of Dickens in his more ambitious passages. It is a curious medium, but it should have been flexible enough for most of the material had it been written with greater care. Though about a fourth of the book is very badly written, this proportion is not high if we compare it scrupulously with the other works which I have been discussing. The bad writing seems to be due less to the method which Melville selected than to his occasional attempts to emulate the defective aspects of the methods which he had rejected, and perhaps to mere carelessness and haste. *Moby Dick,* too, is an allegory, but it is an allegory arising from New England nominalism rather than from medieval realism. Every fact of the universe is seen as an individual creation of God, and hence ordered to his divine plan, but as a particular creation, not as a representative of any universal. Each fact thus has what Schneider calls a "numinous" quality.[12] The relationship between detail and meaning is com-

[12] *The Puritan Mind,* by H. W. Schneider (Henry Holt, 1930) page 48. This and other passages of a similar nature are quoted in my essay on Hawthorne (*In Defense of Reason*). They are applied by Schneider to the colonial Puritans. I suppose that in any allegory, universals will creep in somewhere: Ahab, in *Moby Dick,* represents the soul per se, Fedallah the predestined sinning will in Edwards' terms and the characterizing mind in Melville's, and Starbuck represents unaided virtue, or reason unsupported by Grace. But the whale himself, as the spirit of evil, is less a universal than a unique phenomenon, and so are most of the other details: the warnings,

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monly closer, I think, than in Dante or Spenser, though it is sometimes arbitrary.

In our time we have had the *Cantos* of Ezra Pound, which may be an epic or not, according to your definition. The work has no narrative structure, such as that of *The Iliad*; it has no expository structure, such as that of *The Divine Comedy*. It thus avoids a variety of difficulties. There are a few loosely related themes running through the work, or at least there sometimes appear to be. The structure appears to be that of more or less free association, or progression through revery. Sensory perception replaces idea. Pound, early in his career, adopted the inversion derived from Locke by the associationists: since all ideas arise from sensory impressions, all ideas can be expressed in terms of sensory impressions. But of course they cannot be: when we attempt this method, what we get is sensory impressions alone, and we have no way of knowing whether we have had any ideas or not.

The details, especially in the early *Cantos*, are frequently very lovely, but since there is neither structure nor very much in the way of meaning, the details are details and nothing more, and what we have is the ghost of poetry, though I am willing to admit that it is often the ghost of great poetry. The images are for the most part derived from Pound's reading, which has been wide, and, one might add, scattered; and the references to the reading are commonly so tangential as to be difficult. A number of young scholars at the University of California and at Northwestern University are now engaged in running these references down, and the voluminous notes which they have provided for a few of the *Cantos* are very helpful; but the notes are almost as voluminous as the *Cantos* and can scarcely be held in the head—in fact, when the work is completed, it may well be impossible to hold them in the hand—so that we shall eventually have to read the *Cantos* with a guide more awkward than anything required by Spenser or Dante.

VI

Let me return for a few moments to historiography and to prose fiction. As I have already said, one advantage enjoyed by the his-

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allurements, and the like. The Calvinists themselves could not get rid of universals entirely, for as theologians they had to talk in terms of them; but they did their best. And they were successful to the point that they produced a state of mind that would have seemed strange to Dante and Aquinas.

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toriographer is this: that what he tells has the force of accomplished fact, it has really happened. But this is also a disadvantage, for the historiographer depends upon this particular power more heavily than does any other writer, and the human mind, no matter how learned and talented, is fallible, and the modern reader is sceptical. We have learned to read history with caution and to examine the methods and credentials of the historian. We ask: *did* this really happen, or did it really happen in this way? The question if pursued very far can sometimes be damaging. We discover that Parkman, who wrote in so authoritative a manner about the Indian, knew far less about the Indian than he might have known even at that early date; that he knew next to nothing about the religious mind and religious experience, in spite of the fact that such knowledge would have been relatively easy to acquire if he had had the intelligence to understand it; and we discover that in a variety of ways his mind was very limited. We can find similar defects, more or less numerous and more or less serious, in any famous historian, but in the abler men the defects do only occasional damage. Of those now read, Macaulay has been more attacked than most, but I think unjustly. His mistakes and prejudices are obvious, but they are a small part of the total work, and his mind as we see it throughout the history is learned, judicious, and perceptive. We can scarcely afford to discard a great mind in a peremptory fashion because of a handful of errors.

But after all, the historical work has the advantage of dealing with accomplished and influential facts. One may argue that an interest in such facts is not a literary interest, but I do not believe that we can make this distinction. A large part of the power of any literary work is derived from the subject, and if the subject of history has this advantage, then so much the better for history. On the other hand, the subject of history by virtue of this very quality is relatively unmalleable. The novelist, dramatist, or epic poet may shape his materials more or less to suit his needs, even if the materials are in a large part historical; and in this respect it is worth noting that the historian is no longer allowed the privilege of shaping scenes in the interests of dramatic propriety, nor of analyzing the emotions of his characters. He must confine himself to the material in his documents, and if he wishes to go beyond what is given, he must speculate honestly as a bystander. It is conceivable that the historical novelist might combine the virtues of

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both forms. The historical novel might achieve virtues comparable to those of the epic or virtues comparable to those of the tragic drama, depending on the form of the action. Either way, it would lack the advantages of verse, which are real; but it would also escape the disadvantages of verse in dealing with certain kinds of unavoidable material. The mathematical evaluation and comparison of mere possibilities is difficult; but the civilized mind being what it is, I think that the falsification involved in using the poetic method on the matter of prose has rendered the epic impossible and may well have rendered the poetic tragedy impossible.

A particular kind of history, further, bears an important resemblance to the ancient epic, and may well be regarded as fulfilling the function of the epic for our society. Macaulay's history recounts the rise to power of a culture hero, William III, and his establishment of that form of constitutional government in England which is now regarded by most western peoples as the essentially civilized form of government. William achieved his end without the use of force, at least in England, but by political intrigue, parliamentary procedure, and the careful management of the stupidity of his adversaries and supporters about equally. Parliamentary debate replaces the battles between bronze-age warriors; and when the worst has been said of them, the wars of the mind are more interesting than pugilistic encounters, even though such wars may be too detailed and complex to admit of even the attempt to treat them in narrative verse. And much depends upon them: civilization depends upon them. And the prose may be, and in fact is, very fine.

Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic* was probably influenced by Macaulay, and the subject is similar: Motley deals with William the Silent, the ancestor of William III, with his defeat of the Spanish tyranny in the Netherlands and his establishment in the Netherlands of the essential ideas of constitutional government. Motley's prose is less uniformly excellent than Macaulay's, his exaggerations are more numerous and objectionable, and his intelligence is less comprehensive and profound, but the work is impressive notwithstanding.

There are various kinds of historiography, just as there are various kinds of novel or drama. Henry Adams' *Jefferson and Madison* bears no relationship to the epic form. Like any history it is nar-

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rative, but it is less a single narrative than a collection of narratives controlled by an intention which is expository, critical. and somewhat ironic. It is very great, perhaps quite as great as Macaulay's history, but it is different in form and intention from Macaulay's history.

These speculations on the forms of historiography will probably bore a good many historians, if they should chance to read this composition. Most historians are primarily research scholars, and quite rightly; and some probably know more about the art of historiography than I shall ever know, though only one or two have written anything on the subject worth reading. But I would merely like to insist on certain facts: historiography, whether good or bad, is a form of literature, and the best examples are among the greatest works in our literature; yet the great works of historiography are almost never studied as literature in our universities, and are completely neglected by our literary critics. The study of fiction, on the other hand, occupies a place in the curricula both of our universities and of our literary reviews, which is vastly disproportionate to the achievement of our fictionists. When we consider the relative importance of the materials of history and of fiction, the possibilities of the two forms, and the actual achievement of writers in both forms, these facts are shocking, for the superiority in achievement to date lies with the historiographers, and if the form of the novel has equal capacities the fact has yet to be demonstrated in practice.

VII

The poetic drama, as many people have said, is a kind of imitation. A human action with its accompanying speech is imitated through speech and action: if we see the play performed, we see the action and hear the speech; if we read the play, we read the speech and imagine the action. But either way the play is primarily a form of literature: that is, we reach the action by way of the speech, for even if we see the play performed before having read it, it has still been necessary for the performers to read it and thus understand it before performing, and it is the speech which gives meaning to the action when we see it performed.

I will continue to use *Macbeth* as an example. In *Macbeth*, we have not merely the imitation of an action, but we have a moral

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judgment of the action. The judgment occurs in several ways. It occurs explicitly in the form of the action: that is, Macbeth is destroyed as a result of his sins. It occurs explicitly in the comments of other characters upon Macbeth. It occurs explicitly, and more importantly, as I have said earlier, in Macbeth's comments upon himself. The kinds of judgment thus far indicated, however, are explicit, or denotative, judgments. We could have all of these and still have no more than a good prose synopsis of the play. That which makes it a living simulacrum and a living judgment is the emotion resulting from this rational grasp of the theme. Ideally this emotion should be appropriate to the action at any given stage, and the final emotion should be appropriate to our realization of the significance of the whole. And of course we do not have a simple relation, at any point, of rational understanding to emotion, but once the process begins we have a complex interplay of the two, each enriching the other, the two becoming inseparable in fact, even though we may separate them by analysis for theoretic discussion.

Of course all human productions are imperfect, and Shakespeare's plays, since they were obviously written in haste, contain a good many imperfections. But I am not interested, now, in flaws which may be due to carelessness; I am interested in flaws which may be unavoidable in the medium.

For example, at any given point in the action, the dramatist must make some particular character speak as he ought to speak at that particular point. But what do we mean by *ought to speak?* In real life people do not speak in blank verse; they do not even speak in the rhythmic and inspired prose of Falstaff, nor even of the porter in *Macbeth.* What becomes of the principle of imitation at this point? I believe that it is operative, but the operation is not as simple as the term might imply. The entire play deals with an intense action, and we should all, I imagine, be willing to assume that the perceptions of all the characters are somewhat sharpened and the thought of all somewhat accelerated and heightened by the situation. Furthermore this will have to be true of the main characters: first, simply in the interests of the play; second, because they are all, especially Macbeth, sufficiently intelligent so that this would be more or less true in real life. And if the action is to have this effect on the main characters, it will have to have at least some-

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thing of the same effect on the lesser characters if the texture of the play is not to be deranged. If this heightening and sharpening of emotion and intelligence can be kept, as one might say, in ratio, there will be no difficulty. The porter is somewhat more metaphysical and literary than he would be in real life, but he is a porter in comparison with Macbeth, and so on. We shall have, in other words, an imitation which is not a real imitation; it will be a plausible imitation of an imitation; and in so far as it is successful it will be much more effective than a literal imitation could hope to be, for a literal imitation would give us very little intelligent comprehension of the action beyond that of the literal characters, whereas the imitation of the imitation introduces the intelligence of Shakespeare. With these ideas in mind, we may safely call this procedure imitation.

But there are still difficulties. Let us suppose that the dramatist is imitating the speech of a character of moderate intelligence in a situation of which the character does not in any serious sense understand the meaning. This presents an almost insoluble problem. If a poet is endeavoring to communicate his own best understanding of a human situation, that is one thing. If he is endeavoring to communicate approximately a plausible misunderstanding of a situation on the part of an imaginary character much less intelligent than himself, that is quite another. He can only guess at the correct measure of stupidity which may be proper to such a character in a given situation, whether the character is offered as an imitation or as a plausible imitation of an imitation; and whether he is successful or not, he will still be writing poetry which as poetry will be of an inferior kind. Exactly what is the target? It seems to me that the whole business must in the nature of the case be a rough approximation—and rough approximations are unfortunate affairs in the fine arts.

In Act II Scene 1 of *Macbeth*, for example, Macbeth leaves the stage to kill Duncan. Just before he goes out, there occurs the dagger speech. Macbeth is, at this point in the action, uneducated by his sin. He knows that he is engaged in a desperate business, and he is terrified, but he does not as yet realize the full nature of his business. His character, here, is that of a competent but rough opportunist, somewhat more intelligent than most men of his kind but far less intelligent than he is destined shortly to become. A

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novelist would be able to write about Macbeth and his state of mind, and would thus have an advantage over the dramatist, who must exhibit Macbeth's state of mind in words in some sense appropriate to Macbeth in that state of mind. The novelist could employ the best prose of which he might be capable; the poet cannot employ the best poetry of which he is capable, for such poetry would be out of character—such poetry has to wait until later, when Macbeth has been educated up to the point at which he can speak it plausibly. Yet this is not a minor and quiet situation, such as a novelist, or perhaps Chaucer, might exhibit in a quiet and unobtrusive style as a necessary step toward reaching more important matters. It is a major crisis in the life of Macbeth, and his feelings are terribly aroused, in spite of the fact that his understanding is imperfect. The situation calls for powerful statement; but the statement must be made by an imperfect intelligence.

What would be appropriate language for Macbeth at this point? It is hard to say. But we can examine what he says. The first seven lines of the speech are fine lines, plain in style, and definitive of his perplexity:

> *Is this a dagger which I see before me,*
> *The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.*
> *I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.*
> *Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible*
> *To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but*
> *A dagger of the mind, a false creation,*
> *Proceeding from the heat oppressed brain?*

But these lines are somewhat quiet and speculative, and Macbeth is on the brink of murder. The subsequent lines about the dagger add little to what has been said in the lines just quoted, but they come closer to "imitating" the distraught state of mind, and they give the actor an opportunity to "ham" it. The imitation resides partly in the redundancy, partly in the broken rhythm, partly in the violent detail at the end, the gouts of blood. Now these lines may transform the passage into a plausible imitation of an imitation of a second-rate intelligence in a distraught condition, or it is possible that they fail to do this—I confess that I am unable to say. But they are not very good poetry.

We have here what I have described elsewhere as the fallacy of

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imitative form: the procedure by which the poet surrenders the form of his statement to the formlessness of his subject-matter. You may reply that imitative form as I have here described it is an essential part of the drama and is so justified. Let us say rather that it is an all but inescapable part of drama, at least as the Elizabethans conceived the drama, and stop with that. We have the same problem that we encounter in the later novels of Henry James: the literary form employed necessitates a certain amount of inferior writing. It seems to me that this is a defect of the form, and that we would do well to keep this defect clearly in mind when we are evaluating drama in general or any particular drama. If there is another literary form without that defect or comparable defects, then that form, within the limits of whatever it can accomplish, will be more satisfactory than the drama. Our next question would be to determine whether the more nearly perfect form is or is not more limited in its scope. We might be willing to put up with a certain amount of imperfection for a greater whole.

But I must return for a moment to the interrupted speech. About half way through the speech the dagger is abandoned and the theme of midnight horror is taken up:

> *Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse*
> *The curtained sleep; witchcraft celebrates*
> *Pale Hecate's offerings, and withered murder,*
> *Alarumed by his sentinel, the wolf,*
> *Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,*
> *With Tarquin's ravishing strides, toward his design*
> *Moves like a ghost.*

It seems unlikely that Macbeth in real life would have spoken anything so elaborate, but had he done so it would doubtless have been violent; and it would certainly have been composed of stereotypes, because at this stage of his development he had only a stereotyped understanding of what he was doing: he would probably have found this speech satisfactory in a play. But the fact remains that it is a more or less standard huffing speech, containing something of Marlowe and a little of Pistol; and although it contains a little of Shakespeare in addition, it is far below the great speeches in the play. When I say *far below* I do not mean, necessarily, with respect to the subject, but I mean with respect to the

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way in which the subject is expressed. Is it appropriate? What would be appropriate? It is hard to say. But once again, it is not very good poetry.

Let me hasten to say that I regard *Macbeth* as the greatest play with which I am acquainted and a great work of literature. I have chosen it for this reason, for even in *Macbeth* the difficulties of the form appear. These difficulties are not exceptional, but are common. I could illustrate them further in *Macbeth*, and with progressively greater ease and in greater bulk in the lesser tragedies. And after the half dozen best tragedies, if we remain in Shakespeare, and almost everywhere after we have left Shakespeare, the defective passages of this kind make up the greater part of the whole of every tragedy we may read.

Racine avoids some of this trouble, but I doubt that the result is more satisfactory. His characters, no matter what nation or time they belong to nominally, are characters of the court of Louis XIV. They are highly civilized ladies and gentlemen, who in serious situations behave with a kind of uniform propriety. They are stylized; except in the most subtle ways or at the most extraordinary moments, their personal differences hardly appear. Most of the speeches are plain exposition or argument. The characters, since they are civilized and are all of the same social habits, can speak in a manner which is appropriate at once to the matter under discussion and to their own natures; but their own natures are all very much alike, at least so far as they appear in habits of speech. The writing is effective in developing, or perhaps one might better say in exposing, the extremely skillful dramatic structure, but otherwise it is uninteresting except at certain moments of dramatic crisis, moments at which occur the long set speeches, both expository and impassioned, the *tirades*, which are so characteristic of French tragedy. *Phèdre*, in subject and in structure, is probably no more remarkable than any of four or five other plays by Racine; but it is the most famous, and probably the greatest, and the reason, I believe, is to be found in the great *tirades*: the most famous of these occur at the end of Scene iii of Act I and in Scene vi of Act IV. The plays are elaborate and precise mechanisms for exhibiting dramatic action which rises at certain moments to great poetry; but there is a great deal of mechanism in proportion to the great poetry—the great poetry is dependent on an enormous proportion of merely particular information.

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I think that some of the flaws inherent in poetic drama show up more clearly in comedy, for example, in *Volpone*. The play opens with Volpone's address to his gold. The passage is remarkable. If we consider it merely as a poem, and without reference to the play, it is an exercise in intense and ingenious rhetoric which overemphasizes the importance of its subject. But this overemphasis is precisely the point of the passage with reference to the play, for Volpone is a miser; in fact Volpone is not even a character in the ordinary sense, but is an embodied abstraction, the ideal of the miser incarnate. We do not have the same problem here that we have in the dagger speech in *Macbeth*, for Macbeth is the imitation of a man, and hence Shakespeare had a good deal to distract and confuse him. But Volpone is an embodied abstraction, and Jonson can deal with him on purely theoretic grounds and do it correctly. Volpone, for example, addresses his gold with a passion which is almost sexual; and when he falls in love with Celia he sees her in terms of gold and jewels.

But Volpone is trivial in spite of his intensity. He represents a limited and contemptible passion. Hence, in the opening speech and in others, Jonson is bringing his brilliant poetic talent to bear upon a subject of minimal importance. Jonson, of course, knew this: this is comedy, and comedy is a minor form; furthermore, not only did Jonson know this, but his whole intention in the play is to demonstrate this, to convince us of this for our own improvement. But the fact remains that in spite of brilliant writing we have an extended elaboration of trivial material, and eventually it becomes tedious. Jonson, like Shakespeare, is handicapped by the mimetic principle: Dryden was able to depict Shadwell in Dryden's language and to relate him directly to Dryden's principles; Jonson was forced to depict Volpone in Volpone's language and with relation to Volpone's principles. Jonson did a remarkably brilliant piece of work, if one considers the limitations of his medium, but Dryden did a better—it would not be hard to devise a very good argument to the effect that Dryden's Shadwell, as we get him in *MacFlecknoe* and in the portrait of Og in the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel*, is the greatest comic figure in our literature. Yet Jonson was a far greater poet than Dryden; the evidence lies elsewhere.

The intensity, however, is the essence of Volpone and of the other characters equally, with the exception, perhaps, of Celia and

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Bonario, who are naïve human beings astray among walking psychoses. The intensity, wherever it appears, is the result, not merely of Jonson's intense diction, but even more of Jonson's peculiarly sharp syntax and nervous rhythm. The reader who is trained in poetry can observe all this. The actor, however, who in our time is trained to consider poetry as an obstacle, is likely to destroy entirely this peculiar virtue of the play. And even the best actor might have trouble in rendering this virtue in its entirety, for the difficulties of projecting the voice to a large audience, while still exhibiting the subtleties of the text, and of coördinating the movements of the voice with the slow and clumsy movements of the human body, would seem to render the task impossible.

If we are to read the play instead of seeing it, there is a great deal that makes very dull reading indeed: most of the material involving the Would-Be's and most of that involving Volpone's household entertainers, and perhaps more. Some of this might be saved by skillful acting—I am insufficiently expert in matters of this kind to offer an opinion. But this would seem certain: that if the play is read, much of it is dull; that if the play is acted, a good deal of the rest is certain to be badly damaged. That is, we have a bastard form, which is neither this nor that.

The same difficulty is present in *Macbeth*, though it is far less obvious there, for the subject is serious and hence most of the minor passages are more serious than almost anything in *Volpone*. More would probably survive from *Macbeth* than from *Volpone* in the average performance, for more is present in the text; but the proportion of loss might be as great or even greater. *Macbeth* as a whole certainly bears reading better than *Volpone*. But these remarks merely indicate that *Macbeth* is the greater composition; they are not intended to obscure the flaws inherent in the dramatic form. The play in prose—let us say by Etherege, or Congreve, or Shaw—would seem to offer fewer obstacles as regards performance, for the text is closer to normal speech and demands less of the performers. But such a play offers less to the reader, for it enjoys the advantages neither of poetic style on the one hand, nor of the prose analysis of the novel on the other; it comes closer to being a mere scenario, dependent for its success upon the mechanical aids of the theater.

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VIII

My argument would seem to show that poetic composition of any kind may be more brilliant than prose from time to time, but that it is inherently defective, and will damage the total effect of any work in which it is used. Is this really true, or is there a form of literature which is essentially poetic, in which the most powerful and the most sensitive mode of writing can be used efficiently throughout? I believe that there is such a form: the short poem, or, as it is commonly, loosely, and unfortunately called, the lyric poem.

The history of this poetry follows much the same pattern throughout western Europe, although the dates of certain phenomena vary from country to country, and certain phenomena are in some countries minimized or emphasized for local reasons. The short poem reached its highest structural perfection in English in the late sixteenth century and during the first half or so of the seventeenth. The structural principle was inherited from the Middle Ages: it was that of logic. Sometimes the rigorous forms of logic are concealed or dropped, and we merely have rational discourse, but less often than one might suspect. The principle is sometimes perverted in the interests of mere cleverness, as in some of the sonnets of Sidney, but the principle is still demonstrably active. I am quite aware that simile and metaphor, involving sensory perception, are often used in these poems, although very often they are not, and that there are sometimes elements in such poems to which one might refer figuratively as narrative or dramatic; but all of these are subordinate to the formal principle which I have just named, as rational discourse in the drama is subordinate to the dramatic principle.

In the latter seventeenth century the form of the short poem began to decay, under influences which were later to be summarized as Shaftesburian deism on the one hand and associationism on the other. The beginnings of the decay can be seen in the shorter poems of Milton, and in fact in many passages in the long works; the decay progressed rapidly throughout the eighteenth century; it remained as a kind of endemic confusion throughout the nineteenth century, although by the end of the century there

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were signs of recovery in Bridges and Hardy. In the twentieth century, poetry seems to have moved in two different and clearly defined directions: the decay of form has progressed rapidly in men such as Pound and Eliot; on the other hand there is a recovery of form in the best work of others, for examples, Robinson, Stevens, Louise Bogan, Tate, Cunningham, Kunitz, and Bowers.[13] In the nineteenth century in France Baudelaire and sometimes Leconte de Lisle are a part of this movement toward recovery, and the greatest representative of the movement is a Frenchman of the twentieth century, Paul Valéry.

The short poem, then, is not essentially imitative or narrative, but expository.[14] It may deal with trivial subjects, and most often does; but those subjects are no more trivial than the subjects of most of our novels, and the treatment can be appropriately brief and may be extremely charming. But the short poem is not confined to trivial subjects, as one may observe by reading Jonson's *A Farewell to the World* or Baudelaire's *Le Jeu*. The shortness of the short poem is due, not to triviality of subject, but rather to the formal principle involved. The other forms which I have been discussing are constructed from the depiction, interrelation, and explanation of many details: that is, they are all, in Crane's sense, imitations of action. The short poem is not an imitation of action.

From the time of Aristotle to the present it has been assumed rather carelessly that the depiction of action is the greatest achievement of the literary artist, and that those forms which do not depict action or which depict it incompletely are minor forms. But I

[13] The recovery is occasional in most of these poets, and where it occurs is probably due more to critical tact than to theory. With Cunningham and Bowers, however, it is due to both; they know precisely what they are doing, and the result is remarkable.

[14] A brief word of warning should be introduced here regarding expository poetry. If the poet undertakes a subject which calls for a great deal of meticulous argument, metaphysical, religious, political or other, in order to reach the generalizations having some kind of important human significance, he is again invading the area of prose. Pope's *Essay on Man* is an example: even if we grant the validity of his argument—which would be foolish—the poem fails for this reason, and is impressive only in short passages. Dryden, in *The Hind and the Panther*, tried to evade this difficulty by the use of a preposterous allegory. The poem contains a passage of fine, though not quite first-rate devotional poetry, beginning with line 62 and fading out toward 84; but the passage is inferior to the best of Jonson, Donne, and the Herberts, and is not separable; and the whole poem is dull. In brief, there are certain materials which are proper to expository prose but improper to expository verse, just as there are materials proper to narrative prose but improper to narrative verse. For example, it would have been a mistake to write this essay in verse.

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have never seen a defense of this notion that extended beyond a few sentences or that could bear serious inspection. It is true that human life is composed of action of one kind or another, and that action has consequences, and so on. But the depiction of action per se would not be helpful: it would be meaningless. *Macbeth* is a great play not because it depicts action, but because the action is so ordered and the comments upon the action are such that we can judge the action fully and intelligently. The greatest passages in the play are a part of the action, it is true, but their greatness lies in the fact that they comment upon the action, drawing it together and giving it meaning. Without such passages the play would be inferior to *The Spanish Tragedy*; it would be less than melodrama.

The important thing is not action in itself, but the understanding of action. And I respectfully submit that such understanding can be communicated in general terms, and without the details of a particular story. Life is full of action; we can see it about us and read of it in the newspapers; we are too much involved in it ourselves. It is the raw material of generalization. But I see no reason why the poet should not be as free to generalize directly from what he has seen as the theologian or philosopher. Among the practitioners of the various disciplines of abstract thought there has long been a tendency to regard the mimetic arts with contempt, and although I think that this contempt is due in part to insensitivity and to defects of theory, I think that it may be due also to a perfectly understandable boredom with the infinite repetition of the obvious. There comes a time in the lives of some men when the spectacle is no longer informative but the theory is packed with meaning. The master of the short poem is the poet who deals primarily with the understanding of action, and since his medium is verse he can render as fully as possible the total understanding, not merely the rational but the emotional as well. Since everything that he has to say is important, not merely in relation to the whole poem but in itself, his materials will justify the use of verse throughout his poem.

For the past two hundred and fifty years it has been common to assume that abstract language is dead language, that poetry must depict particular actions, or if it be "lyric" that it must be revery over remembered sensory impressions, according to the formula

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of the associationists. But these assumptions are false. They are our heritage of confusion from Hobbes and Locke, by way of Addison, Hartley, and Alison—and more recently by way of Ezra Pound. A race that has lost the capacity to handle abstractions with discretion and dignity may do well to confine itself to sensory impressions, but our ancestors were more fortunate, and we ought to labor to regain what we have lost. The language of metaphysics from Plato onward is a concentration of the theoretical understanding of human experience; and that language as it was refined by the great theologians is even more obviously so. The writings of Aquinas have latent in them the most profound and intense experiences of our race. It is the command of scholastic thought, the realization in terms of experience and feeling of the meaning of scholastic language, that gives Shakespeare his peculiar power among dramatists, and Fulke Greville his peculiar power among the English masters of the short poem. I do not mean that other writers of the period were ignorant of these matters, for they were not, and so far as the short poem is concerned there were a good many great poets, four or five of whom wrote one or more poems apiece as great as any by Greville; but the command in these two men is not merely knowledge, it is command, and it gives to three or four tragedies by Shakespeare, and to fifteen or twenty poems by Greville, a concentration of meaning, a kind of sombre power, which one will scarcely find matched elsewhere at such great length in the respective forms.

It would be sufficient gratification for me, if I could write one or two poems as great as George Herbert's *Church Monuments* or Ben Jonson's *To Heaven*, as Wallace Stevens' *The Course of a Particular*[15] or J. V. Cunningham's *The Phoenix*. These poems are all on great subjects; the writing of all is as nearly perfect as writing will ever be. They are profound and civilized in all their details; one can turn to them endlessly; they remain in the mind; they alter the mind; they become a part of one's life. But the human spirit is restless, and one is tempted to consider the ideal possibility of still greater achievement in the most civilized of the literary forms.

[15] This poem, which appears to me obviously one of Stevens' half-dozen greatest, and perhaps the best of those, appeared in *The Hudson Review* for the Spring of 1951 (Vol. IV, No. 1). Stevens did not see fit to include it in his *Collected Poems*.

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Baudelaire, for example, planned *Les Fleurs du Mal* not as a mere collection, but as a book. But one does not plan such a book as one might plan a novel: the planning begins with the planning of one's life. Such a book should, in theory, explore as wide a range of experience as possible, and with as much understanding as possible. This calls for a knowledge of the history of literature and ideas, for a knowledge of one's own period, for a grasp of the relationship between ideas and action on the one hand and ideas and style on the other. It calls for a command of the minutiae of style. And it calls for both patience and genius. The actual writing of such a book will be important, but most of the work will be in the preparation. Baudelaire obviously did not meet all the requirements which I have enumerated, but he met some of them fully, and he had at least an inkling of the rest. His book was marred in many ways by his personal eccentricities and by his personal history. The source of his greatest strength was likewise the source of his greatest weakness: his Romantic background. He did not entirely cure himself of his own Romanticism, and as a result some of his poems are very bad and a good many are marred. But his knowledge of the essential viciousness of Romanticism, combined with whatever he retained from his Catholic training, seems to have given him the extraordinary insight into tragic weakness which is the matter of his great poems. Whatever the flaws of the book as a whole, it is a great book; and it contains some of the greatest poems ever written. Furthermore the book points perhaps more clearly than any other to what such a book should be. And I hope that I may be forgiven if I add—for after all I, too, am a professor of a sort—that it points to one of the things that might be accomplished by a civilized department of literature, for the training necessary to the production of the ideal book of this kind will have to begin early. And the early training would not be wasted even if the book were not produced.

And then there is Paul Valéry. Valéry definitely did not produce the great book. Most of his work—and the bulk is small—deals with minor themes, and though it is sensitive and interesting, it often lacks clarity both of outline and of detail. His prose is fragmentary and somewhat affected, and it seems to me that he plays somewhat irresponsibly with somewhat childish ideas, at any rate when he is writing of poetry. But in the course of his lesser

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work he accumulated ideas about certain related themes, and these were organized mainly in two poems, *Le Cimetière Marin* and *Ébauche d'un Serpent*, which so far as my knowledge and judgment will guide me are the two greatest short poems ever written. The first of these is the simpler to grasp, and hence is the better known. The second is the greater. I will try to give an account of it.

As short poems go, it is a trifle long: it contains thirty-one stanzas, each stanza containing ten octosyllabic lines. The rime-scheme varies at will. It is a monologue spoken by the Serpent in the Garden of Eden, and deals with the Serpent's relationship to God, with the temptation of Eve, and with the nature of evil. The poem employs the Judaeo-Christian myth and depends upon the Christian concept of evil as privation; but it is neither Jewish nor Christian in the full development of its thought. The general theme is approximately this: God, or perfect being, had existed in a state of immobile perfection; the created universe is a flaw in this perfection—God, tired of the pure spectacle of himself, destroyed his own perfection, dissipated his principle into consequences, his unity into stars. Heaven is his error, Time is his ruin, and with them the gaping and animal abyss. The Serpent was the first and greatest creature, who now illuminates the diminution of God with all the fires of the Seducer. The Serpent had loved God to the point of complete loss of self; but he now hates him equally, for he realizes that by virtue of being a creature he is imperfect, deprived of the knowledge which as an intellectual creature he infinitely desires, and so damned. God was aware of his error when he created man, and his breath upon the clay was a sigh of despair. The Serpent hates men created in the image of God, just as he hates God, who creates so many imperfect prodigies; the Serpent is the one who modifies and retouches, and who will change these little garden snakes into furious reptiles, who will, in other words, seduce mankind from its simple and animal felicity to the same passion for unobtainable knowledge which is the source of his own agony. It is notable that Adam does not appear in the poem, except as his existence is implied occasionally by plural forms. The Serpent is the conscious and energetic intelligence, the intelligence of male genius, the mind of man. Eve is the common human intelligence, female, her soul as yet stupid at the threshold of the

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flesh. Eve is being seduced into a desire for infinite knowledge, but the psychological pattern is that of a sexual seduction; the psychological details, however, are not merely psychological but are metaphysical as well. Eve falls, and the Serpent is saddened. The Tree of Knowledge is shaken, and then the Serpent addresses the Tree in the final stanzas, stanzas in which he turns away from the somewhat pathetic and trivial sin of seducing Eve to his original desire for unobtainable knowledge. He is so created that he desires infinite knowledge, and he is so created that he cannot have it. The desire is his nature, his greatness, his sin, and his torture, and it is inescapable. The Tree grows infinitely toward infinity; the Serpent (this old expert at chess) cradles himself in the branches, so that the fruit trembles and falls: the fruit of death, despair and disorder. The Serpent offers to the glory of God the triumph of his own sadness; and the thirst which made the tree gigantic exalts even to Being (or God) the strange Omnipotence of Nothingness (the Serpent). The theme is the most inclusive of tragic themes: one might describe it as the theme of tragedy.

Some of Valéry's French admirers have had a good deal to say about Valéry's use of sibilants, the hissing sounds, in obtaining his effects. The sibilants are, of course, there, although one can overemphasize this sort of thing, for French, like English, is full of sibilants. However, it is true that the poem is onomatopoetic: it is literally constructed in terms of the movement and sounds of the Serpent. At certain points the Serpent explicitly refers to the similarity between the movements of his thought and the movements of his body, as in the fifth stanza, which is part of the address to the sun.

Verse-moi ta brute chaleur,
Où vient ma paresse glacée
Rêvasser de quelque malheur
Selon ma nature enlacée . . .
Ce lieu charmant qui vit la chair
Choir et se joindre m'est très cher!
Ma fureur, ici, se fait mûre;
Je la conseille et la recuis,
Je m'écoute, et dans mes circuits,
Ma méditation murmure. . . .

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In the twenty-fourth stanza, we are at the crisis of the seduction. The Tree of Knowledge is caressing one of Eve's breasts with its shadow; the other breast shines like a pistil. Eve's breath now sings to the Serpent, asking him to tempt her further: "*Siffle, Siffle*!, me chantait-il!" And then:

Et je sentais frémir le nombre,
Tout le long de mon fouet subtil,
De ces replis dont je m'encombre:
Ils roulaient depuis le béryl
De ma crête, jusqu' au péril!

The excitement of the Serpent vibrates the length of his body, from his head to his tail, and beyond, into a kind of purely spiritual electricity. This is one of the relatively few stanzas which end in a couplet, and one of the advantages of the varying rime scheme can be observed here: the couplet accelerates the movement and intensifies the excitement.

There are other explicit statements of this relationship, but these two will have to serve. The structure of the poem is that of a closely controlled development by association. The controlling theme is that of the metaphysical concept of the creation which I have mentioned and the necessary effect of such a creation upon the intellectual creature. The metaphysical concept is defined at length in several passages, as are the Serpent's love and hatred for God and for Eve. There is nothing resembling the free association of Pound's *Cantos*; but we have rather an imitation of the psychological movement of a great mind back and forth among closely related topics, the shifts occurring as the passion aroused by one topic suggests an aspect of another topic. Furthermore this mind is also the mind of Valéry, for the Serpent's metaphysics are Valéry's metaphysics, and Valéry sees the tragedy as inevitable.[16]

[16] In *Le Cimetière Marin*, Valéry is unmistakably the speaker, and there is no dramatic intermediary. The Sun is the image of the First Cause, and is not, as in the *Serpent*, the accomplice of the speaker. Valéry addresses the Sun in much the same terms used by the Serpent in addressing the Creator:

L'âme exposée aux torches du solstice,
Je te soutiens, admirable justice
De la lumière aux armes sans pitié!
Je te rends pure à ta place première:
Regarde-toi! . . . Mais rendre la lumière
Suppose d'ombre une morne moitié.

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There is no surrender of form, therefore, to a dramatic subject inferior to the author: Valéry is able to write at his best at all times. He is able, in these ways, to borrow something from the dramatic method and something from the associationists, without sacrificing the essential form of the short poem, that of exposition, or its essential virtue, the most intelligent writing possible, not merely as regards the total structure, but in every detail. And the progression of the poem from topic to topic and back again suggests the movement of the Serpent: it is sometimes slow and meditative, sometimes slow and impassioned, sometimes rapid and impassioned, but the timing is beautiful: the movement of the mind is always visible and audible. The long stanza, with its short lines and changing rime scheme, is an instrument beautifully chosen for this end.

I would like to say something about the peculiar quality of the imagery, which I think is essentially new, although one can find it elsewhere in our century, for example in certain passages and short poems by Wallace Stevens. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the third Earl of Shaftesbury summarized the anti-intellectual notions which had been developing in the seventeenth century and organized them into a loose system. About twenty years later Pope summarized these and a few additional concepts in his *Essay on Man*. Pope was able to tell us that instinct must go right, while reason may go wrong, and to add that "Equal is common sense and common ease." By the time of Pope the ideas were generally accepted by men of letters, and the elaborate ethical

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Compare this passage with stanza eight, lines five, six, and seven, of the *Serpent* which I shall quote plus en avant. Consider also:

Tu n'as que moi pour contenir tes craintes!
Mes repentirs, mes doutes, mes contraintes
Sont le défaut de ton grand diamant.

The theme of this poem again is the flaw in the creation. The particular aspect of the flaw upon which the poem concentrates is the insolubility of the mystery of discontinuity, which we encounter in the act of creation (Entre le vide et l'évènement pur) and in the mystery of death, and the emphasis in most of the poem is on death, although the address to Zeno near the conclusion emphasizes the mystery of change as change. Like the *Serpent*, this poem emphasizes the torture of life on these terms (Amour, peut-être, ou de moi-même haine?) and rejects immortality on these terms (Maigre immortalité noire et dorée). Unlike the *Serpent* it asserts in the last stanzas the necessity of continuing to live in the time allotted us. Such an assertion would be superfluous in the *Serpent*, for the Serpent, as myth on the one hand, or as the figurative representative of the mind of man on the other, is immortal in any event. That is the final horror of his situation.

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system by which earlier poets had understood human nature had been repudiated. The abstract statement of the great poets of the Renaissance degenerated into the eighteenth century cliché, which, however, still had the virtue of a kind of vague formality; the 18th century cliché, in turn, was replaced in the nineteenth century by mawkish and amateur moralizing wherever abstract statement was attempted. While the quality of abstract statement was deteriorating, such statement was being replaced rapidly by descriptive detail. Hobbes and Locke had taught that ideas arise from sensory impressions: Addison taught that the business of the poet was description, largely in visual terms, and this doctrine was elaborated by later writers. In the descriptive poems of Thomson, the Wartons, and others, there is the obvious assumption that the enthusiastic description of the merely visible is in some obscure way a pious act. If one will compare the selections in the *Oxford Book of 17th Century Verse* with those in the *Oxford Book of 18th Century Verse*, one will scarcely fail to be astonished not merely by the deterioration of poetic style but by the completeness of the deterioration and by the rapidity with which it occurred. The condition of poetry did not alter noticeably in the nineteenth century. Here and there, as in a few passages in Wordsworth or in the *Ode to Autumn*, the description is admirable, and there are a few solid poems: Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty*, Browning's *Serenade at the Villa*, Christina Rossetti's *A Pause of Thought*, and perhaps a few others; but there is not much intelligence until one gets down to Bridges and Hardy. The situation in French is roughly comparable, although French poetry shows much more intelligence than does English from the time of Baudelaire and Leconte de Lisle onward.

From time to time in this period of depression a curious phenomenon occurs. *The Tiger*, by Blake, is a good example of it. The Tiger is the God of this Universe, the Spirit of Evil. In the poem he is a symbol of evil. But the poem contains no definition of evil, either implicit or explicit, and this is fortunate, for Blake regarded the rational mind as the source of all evil. The poem gives us not merely a tiger, but a kind of superlative tiger. So far as evil is concerned one can deduce the notion only from the feeling of the poem, from the obscure and bardic exaltation and from the violence of the often brilliant description. In other words, we get an intense description of a tiger, and a vague feeling of evil;

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or to put it another way, the matter described is described with so much genius and with a tone of such high conviction, that it seems to mean more than it does, and succeeds in duping not merely the reader but the writer. Needless to say, this was not the procedure of Donne and Jonson. But it was the procedure of Verlaine, a sensitive and sentimental poet of no great force, and of Rimbaud and Mallarmé, both of them far more talented poets than Blake. We can see it in our own time and language in Hart Crane, a poet indirectly influenced by these Frenchmen and directly by Blake. And these three Frenchmen, Mallarmé in particular, were Valéry's immediate and respected predecessors.

The concentration on the sensory perception resulted in a great deal of turgid and repetitious writing; but it also, especially as practiced by such masters of self-hypnosis and of the skills of undirected connotation as those I have mentioned, resulted in an extraordinary sensitivity to sensory perception and in an extraordinary sophistication in its expression and management. Of this sensitivity and sophistication, Valéry was the inheritor, and he added to what was left him by his ancestors, but he was not satisfied with it in a pure state. In Valéry we have this heightened sensory awareness, and we have the tone which convinces us that the details have meaning; but we also have the meaning, and the meaning is of quite as fine a quality as the rest. The image is different in kind, however, from almost anything one will find in the Renaissance, whether French or English. In Ben Jonson, for example, the language is almost purely abstract; in George Herbert and many others sensory details are named or implied, but not to be seen or heard; where we get a sensory image which is intended to affect our senses as well as our intellects, as in *The Lamp*, by Vaughan, or as in Donne's *Valediction of His Name in a Window*, we ordinarily get an explicit and fully developed simile or metaphor. But in Valéry we get something else, at least as a rule: we get the sharp sensory detail contained in a poem or passage of such a nature that the detail is charged with meaning without our being told of the meaning explicitly, or is described in language indicating such meaning indirectly but clearly. The method is every bit as fine as that of the Renaissance poets, so long as the poet practicing the method has the necessary qualifications. I will give one example of this kind of imagery from the first stanza of *Le Cimetière Marin*:

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Midi le juste y compose de feux
La mer, la mer, toujours recommencée. . . .

Noon the precise composes there of fires
The sea, the sea, forever rebegun . . .

Noon, or the sun at high noon, appears to be creating the sea from moment to moment, because we perceive the sea by way of the sunlight, and the moving sea is alive with the many diamonds of imperceptible foam which are mentioned a few lines later. "Forever rebegun": the sea appears to be starting over from moment to moment, because it is forever sinking and rising, simultaneously sinking and rising; but the phrase, if I remember rightly, had been used previously by Bergson (and the idea, of course, by Heraclitus) to describe the total universe, and even without this clue we should presently be aware that more is being given us than the visual image. The sun is the image of the First Cause who creates the physical universe perpetually, from moment to moment, and the sea, though not the sole representative of the created universe in this poem, is the primary representative. One may find something here and there in the Renaissance which resembles this method, but I do not think that the resemblance will often be very clear.

In *Ébauche d'un Serpent* we have three dominant images: the Serpent, Eve, and the Tree of Knowledge; and we have an additional concept, which dominates all of them, that of the Creator. Every particular image is informed with meaning because of its relationship with one or more of these. And since the Creator is of necessity a metaphysical concept, a great deal of the language is not immediately involved in sensory perception—much more of the language than one may suspect on a casual reading; but the purely metaphysical language and the language of sensory perception reflect upon each other, inform each other, so that we have the impression of a more or less continuous texture. The physical details live in this texture with a kind of electrical energy. In the detail, just as in the structure, Valéry has recovered what was usable in the innovations of the decadence, and has incorporated this with what was best in the traditional method.

I wish now to give a brief outline of the development of the poem, and if the reader should have a copy of the poem at hand, I would be grateful if he would open his book and follow me—

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follow me, bearing in mind what I have said about the general theme, the manner of developing the theme, and the qualities of the language. My account of the development of the poem will not be complete: I will merely attempt to indicate the method, and will leave the examination of all the details to the reader.

In the first stanza, the Serpent describes himself as a sophisticated and malicious animal. The second stanza continues this theme, but in connection with it introduces the Serpent's love of sunlight and his threat to the human race. The two new elements introduce the third stanza by way of association; for the sun warms the serpent, as animal, to intense activity, and the sun is the most magnificent of his accomplices, is the one who prevents humans from knowing that the universe is merely a flaw in the perfection of Non-being; and these considerations remind the Serpent that this was the place where he enjoyed the spectacle of the Fall of Man. His memory of the Fall of Man brings the Creator to mind—"O Vanité! Cause Première!"—and we have the definition of the error of creation in stanzas six and seven. Stanza eight is the climax of this passage, and tells us of the Serpent's love and hatred of the Creator, and of the despair of the Creator when he breathed life into man, a despair which is shared by the Serpent throughout the poem:

Objet radieux de ma haine,
Vous que j'aimais éperdument,
Vous qui dûtes de la géhenne
Donner l'empire à cet amant,
Regardez-vous dans ma ténèbre!
Devant votre image funèbre,
Orgueil de mon sombre miroir,
Si profond fut votre malaise
Que votre souffle sur la glaise
Fut un soupir de désespoir!

Stanza nine and the first four lines of ten deal with the Serpent's contempt for the Creator's new creatures, and in fact his hatred for them:

À la ressemblance exécrée,
Vous fûtes faits, et je vous hais!
Comme je hais le nom qui crée
Tant de prodiges imparfaits!

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The remainder of ten, and all of eleven and twelve are devoted to the Serpent's powers of temptation:

Je suis Celui qui modifie,
Je retouche au coeur qui s'y fie . . .

and these lines display extraordinary understanding of human nature.

In stanza thirteen, Eve is introduced in person, and the recollection of the temptation begins. The temptation occupies fourteen stanzas, and I can give only a short account of it. The Serpent has already expressed his hatred of the new creatures, and the hatred is real; but he is in love with Eve:

Ève, jadis, je la surpris,
Parmi ses premières pensées . . . .

Les plus purs s'y penchent les pires,
Les plus durs sont les plus meurtris. . . .
Jusques à moi, tu m'attendris,
De qui relèvent les vampires!

And yet the love and hatred remain mixed and result in a very accurate and cynical understanding of Eve's character:

La superbe simplicité
Demande d'immenses égards!
Sa transparence de regards,
Sottise, orgueil, félicité,
Gardent bien la belle cité!
Et par ce plus rare des arts,
Soit le coeur pur sollicité;
C'est là mon fort, c'est là mon fin,
À moi les moyens de ma fin!

The understanding of Eve's character leads to a very subtle and successful seduction, the details of which I must leave to the reader. The seduction leads to the melancholy indifference of the Serpent:

O follement que je m'offrais
Cette infertile jouissance:
Voir le long pur d'un dos si frais
Frémir la désobéissance! . . .

And at the same time the Tree of Knowledge is shaken, as it frees its essence of wisdom and of illusions.

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Then follows the great address to the Tree of Knowledge, a single sentence of twenty-four lines, in which we see the Tree, as tree, growing downward and upward forever, and the Serpent, "Reptile aux extases d'oiseau," cradled in its branches:

Berceau du reptile rêveur
Qui jeta l'Ève en rêveries. . . .

The triumph over Eve is regarded from a slightly melancholy but essentially indifferent distance, but even in the concluding lines the Serpent sees himself as the adversary—"ce vieil amateur d'échecs"—and his eyes cause the treasures of the Tree to tremble, and from the treasures there fall the fruits of death, despair, and disorder; and we see the Serpent finally in his essential predicament:

Beau Serpent, bercé dans le bleu,
Je siffle, avec délicatesse,
Offrant à la gloire de Dieu
Le triomphe de ma tristesse . . .

And in the last three lines he addresses the Tree:

Cette soif qui te fit géant,
Jusqu'à l'Être exalte l'étrange
Toute-Puissance du Néant!

The primary theme is the descent from perfection to imperfection in the act of creation, and the plight of the intellectual creature whose desire is for the infinite perfection of which he is deprived and who realizes that his nature is evil by virtue of the privation; this provides the expository form of the whole poem. Subsidiary to this is the exhibition of the character of the creature in question, the Serpent, both in his philosophical meditations and in his account of the seduction of Eve. Incidental to all this is the action of the seduction and the characterization of Eve. The matter of the poem is important at every point; there is nothing trivial, either because of inherent foolishness or because of its particularity; there is nothing, therefore, which is embarrassing to the poet as poet. The poem is great in its conception, complex but clear in the organization of the conception, and all but miraculously successful in the realization of every detail. No suspension of intelligence is required of us; in fact we shall have

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to keep our intelligence wholly alert if we are to follow the poem. No question of belief or disbelief in a myth is involved, for the myth is not offered as a myth—it is offered as a figure of speech. I do not wish to give the impression that I am trying to startle my readers for my own entertainment, but I have studied this poem for a good many years, and in my opinion it is the greatest poem which I have ever read, regardless of kind.

IX

This essay has been merely a rapid outline, and I have allowed myself space for only a minimum of analysis and illustration. The opinions which I have offered are the result of a good many years of reading and thought, and I have offered them seriously; but I am aware that a full defense of them would require more time. However, let me call the reader's attention to this: if I seem to be attempting to instigate a revolution, it is merely in critical thinking and is not in the practice of literature. The epic and the poetic drama, for example, have long been dead, and I did not kill them. I have merely tried to account for their death, and to express my belief that the fault is not with us but is in the nature of the forms. The novel, for the most part an abortive form from its beginnings, is dying rapidly; but here I think that the fault is with us—with the novelists and the critics. The writers of the short poem have done very well, if one regards them over a long period, and they are definitely alive today; but I am convinced that greater achievements are possible in the short poem and that we would have a better chance of such achievements if we could bring ourselves to understand the nature of the form and the fact that this form is the greatest form, of all forms the one most suited to communication among those who are wholly civilized and adult.

I have tried to indicate the kinds of problem which must be studied if we are to estimate the possibilities of any of the forms, and some of the most pressing problems in connection with each form. I may be wrong in any or all of my particular conclusions, but if I am wrong it will have to be demonstrated by argument. If my arguments are merely brushed aside, I shall win by default within twenty years. If I am right, there will be no great harm in this, and it will not be the first time I have won an argument in this manner; but if I am wrong, it will be unfortunate.

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EZRA POUND

Canto 97

Melik & Edward struck coins-with-a-sword,
"Emir el Moumenin" (Systems p. 134)
six and ½ to one, or the sword of the Prophet,
SILVER being in the hands of the people
"and for the first time in my life
"I had thousand $ bills in my hand-bag"
(Princess A.)
after the 27/75 Spew Deal wangle
one billion and whatso in dinars, Gothic 8,
barleycorn, habbeh, tussuj, danik, one mithcal,
Shafy and Hanbal both say 12 to 1,
Roman Christers
"and by devlish ingenuity Abd-el-Melik"
says, ut supra Paulus the Deacon, out of Theophanus,
& went decimal,
and the Prophet
set tax on metal
(i.e. as distinct from) & the fat 'uns pay for the lean 'uns,
said Imran,
& a king's head and "NOUCH KHOR" persian,
optative, not dogmatic,
· in fact as sign of
cordiality and Royal benevolence.
AND in 1859 a dhirem "A.H. 40" was
paid into the post-office, Stamboul.
Struck @ Bassora
36.13 English grains.
"I have left Irak its dinar",
& one fifth to God.
Percussum forma publica corium. JANUS ACE.
Said Lear: "not for coining." "Can't get me on *that*, I am Royal."
"This leather" (Seneca)
Charisius, cited by Scaliger,

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Andoleon of Paeonia,
Gold scrupulum: 20 aces. A.U. 437
but now they play with 12 draughtsmen,
the scrupulum one 9th of an aureus
B.C. 316
"Outre la livre pondérable,"
2000 aces: one double eagle,
Monsieur Gibbon nearer than Mommsen @ this point
or than Lenormant
"Qu'on décrie"
that was after Caligula
And that the Senate coined after Nero
June 9th, 68,
LIBERTATI
to July of the next year
LIBERTAS RESTITUITA.
£.s.d. as from Caracalla,
Venice, Florence, Amalfi maintained 12 to 1 ratio,
one gold against that in silver,
leather stamped at the siege of Faenza &
in Mathew Paris for 1250 anno Domini (Aug.).
In Avignon wrote of transmutation, that is, Papa Johannes
wrote there of the transmutation of metals,
Darius, and Targitaus, nowt new in monopoly.
Cicero tried to keep gold in the country Senatus Consultu,
"gravissime me consule judicavit".
Theodosian Code thirteen, eleven, eleven,
£.s.d. is from Caracalla
first fish & vadmal or cloth money, then "baug" rings
pseudo roman, and then, later, moslem
dinars, maravedis,
kelt coin & norse "herring", 8 stycas: one scat
"The most powerful engine" says Del Mar.
King Offa @ 6 and ½
Alfred, finally, Athelstan 12;
Canute opposing Byzantium, 20 scads to the dinar,
100 scads to the mark (of accountancy)
Edgar's leather (?) came after Athelstan
"thon yilden he gon rere"
that is, guilds into England,

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"And he, the president, is true to his caste
"and that caste," said old Lampman, "the underworld."
1948
Mencken joked inopportunely. "I am sorry,"
said the London judge, "that this has been brought as a civil
and not as a criminal action."
Missenden, Dunmore for coining, not me, said Lear,
a canon of Sempingham, clandestine export.
Offa's gold, then an hiatus, then Henry,
Crimen majestatis, the Third, & the plebs
not then in public affairs
AT all, utterly, and in 1914 british sovreigns
poured into the Philadelphia mint in great quantity
and were promptly restamped with eagles.
Coins struck by Coeur de Lion in Poitou,
Caxton or Polydore, Villon: "blanc",
a gold Bacchus on your abacus,
Henry Third's second massacre, wheat 12 pence a quarter
that 6 4/5ths pund of bread be a farden
Act 51, Henry Three. If a penny of land be a perch
that is grammar
nummulary moving toward prosody
πρόσοδος φόρων ἡ ἐπέτειος.
μεταθεμένων after Dandolo got into Byzance
& worsened AND. . . .
and the Third Edward
(not to mention the VIIth)
Thus Dante: "Senna"; and Villon: "décrie".
& in 1311 the barons wanted a voice in the chapter
"coignagio stagminis"
"that religious men as well as all other
shall forfeit."
Almoravedis' gold was in Britain
with bezants
& after
40 to 43 grains of true gold.
Old standard or Araby, 9, 7, 9?
And out of Scanda in Colchis,
Getes had been in Cythera
(vide Pausanias, the Laconics)

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2 doigts to a boodle, one bawbee: one sixty doigts,
Will they get rid of the Rooseveltian dung-hill
And put Capn. Wadsworth back in the school books?
ED. Three, dei gratia, "old standard"
& there was a good deal of sand-paper ordered,
a staple which seems to move without great publicity.
Mons of Jute should have his name in the record,
thrones, courage, Mons should have his name in the record.
Vasa klipped for the people, Lycurgus, nomisma,
and "limitation is the essence of good nomisma"
but Goertz von Schlitz had not thought of this,
Sweden, Pultawa, and was in any case,
executed for something
1745 Copjenhaven, the nine year old bank relieved of conversion.
When kings quit, the bankers began again.
15.08 Denmark and Scandinavs (ratio) in '73
18, that is 1873
on which Mr Benton would have reflected, as per:
the CONtinuous effort to have it different somewhere or other.
And if these were quarter dhirems in Friesland
they should be of ratio 6 & one half
to the quarter (talis est) dinars of Spain.
"The olde double-ducat,
The olde turkish grouch."
And then Amsterdam (1609) busted the Wisselbank
and said who shd/ deal in exchange,
But Mr Del Mar does not, at this point,
connect issue with backing,
though he is all for a proper total proportion
between total issue and buyables,
Ike, '55, had got that far.
And Baffico had papers, daily papers, giornali.
"And as to Thomas, *legat de Leicestre*:
that our coin be raised
as is that of the Emperor." 1526
"As ours is being conveyed out of the Realm". "Ad perpetuam liberationis divinae memoriam," said the Dutch on white pasteboard.
"Rien de ce monde", said Villon, inclusively
"Godt behoede."

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Pugno propatria. And
degradations, depradations, degradations whatsodam
of emperors, kings and whatsodam,
Dukes et cetera have since been exceeded,
Kitson, Fenton & Tolstoi had observed this.
And by curious segregation Brooks Adams ignores him, Del Mar,
and he, Adams, so far as I have yet met them,
despite stylistic resemblance.
"Salzburg alone struck full weight."
The 1806 Prussian notes
ran 90 years,
Octonary sun-worshiping Baltic.
371¼ grains silver in Del's time
as I have seen them by shovels full
lit by gas flares.
One wd/ suppose Theresa's 390,
but were, apparently, 353 and a fraction,
at Salzburg 5 more, or supposedly 361, or
"Window-dressing" as Bryan admitted to Kitson.
"Legal in all states (1841) of the Zollverein
and in 1873 was a crisis
in vain did Hume, in vain von Humboldt!"
Such suckers, or at any rate sophists as
Cobden and Liverpool.
A disc of light over von Humboldt.
Von Schultz and Sir William Harcourt
both wished to retain some national independence,
"so long as a state resigns. . . .
"something" sd/ Frank Harris
"the value of which is unknown".
Albuquerque made discs in Goa.
18, CHARLES SECOND c.5
In 1816 gave up power over the ratio
and 1870 gave up the remains of prerogative.
"Victoria, Victoriaa, w'ere 'ave I 'eard that nyme?"

Goldsmiths not aiming at 義 *i*

not ruled by Sophia (*σοφία*)
πίστις, σοφία

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Del Mar examined Gansl,
that would have been in the time of Centennial
50 years after Mr Jefferson's death.
"Duped into double indebtedness",
"Portcullis" struck by the Crown, but Charles
let the East Indias do it
"with the Company's own devices"
Assyria, Babylon, Macedonia,
always more somewhere than somewhere,
but the (*abbreviare*) the great gap declining.
Steed asked Douglas about the rupee.
1858: End of the Company.
Sylla 9 (ratio 9), Caesar 12
and stayed there till the fall of Byzantium.
"The signal was given by Mr Marble"
(a modest name from some angles)
"Not read except by title". Mr Carlyle:
"This coil of Geryon" (Djerion) said Mr Carlyle,
in Congress,
who later went to the Treasury,
New fronds,
novelle piante 新
what ax for clearing?
親 *ch'in*¹ 旦 *tan*⁴ 親 *ch'in*¹
οἶνος αἰθίοψ the gloss, probably,
not the colour. So hath Sibilla a boken ysette
as the lacquer in sunlight ἀλιπόρφυρος
& shall we say: russet-gold.
That this colour exists in the air
not flame, not carmine, orixalxo, les xaladines
lit by the torch-flare,
& from the nature the sign,
as the small lions beside San Marco. Out of ling
the benevolence
靈

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Kuanon, by the golden rail,
Nile διϊπετέος the flames gleam in the air
and in the air ἀίσσουσιν
Bernice, late for a constellation, mythopoeia persisting,
(now called folc-loristica)
reserpine clearing fungus,
Uncle William frantically denying his
most intelligent statements (re/ every individual soul, per esempio)
δολιχηρέτμοισι

親 為 仁
以 寶 親

"Ten men" said degli Uberti "who will charge a
nest of machine guns
"for one who will put his name on a chit."
All neath the moon, under Fortuna,
splendor' mondan',
beata gode, hidden as eel in sedge,
all neath the moon, under Fortuna

hoc signo 貞 chen (*four*), hoc signo

with eyes pervanche,
three generations, San Vio
darker than pervanche?
Pale sea-green, I saw eyes once,
and Raleigh remarked, on Genova's loans non-productive,
that they had only their usury left,
and there was that Führer of Macedon, dead aetat 38,

The temple is holy,

because it is not for sale.
"No, George, don't you be with that fellow for president,
"We don't know what he'll do next."

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Some faint connection
between criminality and calamity,
lo jorn, Der Tag
that at least a few should perceive this tan

Arnaut spoke his own language, 26th Purgatorio,
above the Moon there is order,
beneath the Moon, forsitan.
And if, say, we had a pope, like Pisani?
abbreviare
faster than it distributes the power to buy,
but the interval, 15, 16, (vide Benton)
as from 12 to 6 and one half,
but by that time they found some other wangle,
by '78, T.C.P. said "non-interest-bearing"
as from Adams to Rush, as from Vasa (Gustavus)
Since when they have had several wars.
Pieire Cardinal mentioned *that* subject.
Earth under Fortuna,
each sphere hath its Lord,
with ever-shifting change, sempre biasmata,
gode,
"Not difficult to make"
said Brancusi
"mais *nous*, de nous mettre en état DE les faire."
"Je peux commencer une chose tous les jours,
mais fi---nir!"
"All true," said Griffith
"but I can't move 'em with it."
Ownership? Use? there is a difference.

The temple is not for sale.

"Always" said Del Croix, "the same things".
"By the conquest," said Picabia, "of Alsace-Lorraine".
Art is local,

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Ike driven to the edge, almost, of a thought.
Started with a limited (if not by dogma, but in practice)
suffrage of the qualified,
πανουργία now at the top.
Tried to get Essad out,
but he died at the gate-post,
and you will certainly not convert them
if you remove the houris from Paradise.
Even Aquinas could not demote her, Fortuna,
violet, pervanche, deep iris,
beat' è, e gode,
the dry pod could not demote her, plenilune,
phase over phase.
Dante had read that Canzone.
Birds, said Hudson, are not automata.
Even Jonathan Edwards is said to have noticed trees,
and as for who have a code and no principles . . .
The Twelve Tables penalized satire,
and some one has wiped out most of Lucilius
and there is, of course, very little about Antoninus
left in their records,
Luigi, *gobbo*, makes his communion with wheat grain
in the hill paths
at sunrise

ONE, ten, eleven, *chi con me* tan?

And the dogmatic have to lie now and again
to maintain their conformity,
the chun tze, never.
And as for the original-sin racket . . . . . the hex-hoax,
Aswins drawing the rain-cloud,
Fou-Hi by wood.
In a buck-board with a keg of money: Damn you, I
said I would get it (the wages).

The temple is holy because it is not
for sale

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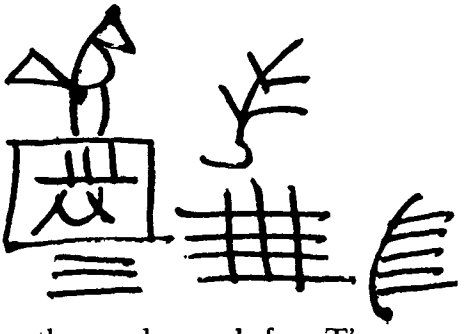
From Sargon of Agade 

a thousand years before T'ang,
gothic arch out of India,
from Multan 700 *li*,
torchlight, at Multan, offer perfume,
Son of Herakles, Napat son of Waters,
Panch, that is Phoenician, Tyanu

lion head

Came then autumn in April and
"By Knoch Many now King Minos lies",
From Sargon to Tyana
no blood on the altar stone.
"As THAT!" said Ungaro,
"It is just as hard as that"
(jabbing a steel cube with his pencil butt
and speaking of mind as resistant).
Ville d'Avray, Pre Catalan, permanence,
an interest in equity
not in mere terminology
μετά τὰ φυσικά
metah, not so extraneous, possibly not so extraneous
most "*metas*" seem to be in with.
"Had not *thought* about government", Adams;
"or civilization" said Monsieur Bonaparte,
at least I think it was Bonaparte.
The artigianato bumbles into technology,
"Buckie" has gone in for structure (quite rightly)
but consumption is still done by animals.
"Luce benigna, negli occhi tuoi,
Quel che voglio io, tu vuoi?
Tu vuoi."

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May 4th. Interruption
mid dope-dolls an' duchesses
tho' orften I roam,
some gals is better,
some wusser
than some.
But that the free-born run wode into slavery
this is not good;
run wode in job hunting,
this is NOT good.

"Got no stone" said Knittl.

Flowers, incense, in the temple enclosure,
no blood in that TEMNOS
when crocus is over and the rose is beginning.
PAUL, the Deacon, Migne 95.
Upsalà, was the golden fane,
ministrat virtutem, Fricco, pacem. Voluptatem,
ingenti Priapo.
Dea libertatis, Venus.
Agelmund son of Ayon, reigned 33 years.
PUER APULIUS
"Fresca rosa" sang Alcamo.
Of Antoninus very little record remains

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That he wrote the book of the Falcon.
Mirabile brevitate correxit, says Landulph
of Justinian's Code
and built Sta Sophia, Sapientiae Dei

正
名

As from Verrius Flaccus to Festus (S.P.)
that the greeks say ἀρσενικὰ,
ἀνδρικὰ being less elegant.
All this came down to Leto (Pomponio)
wanting the right world θηλυκά.
Deorum Manium, Flamen Dialis & Pomona
(seeking the god's name)
"that remain in all aethera terrenaeque"
Manes Di, the augurs invoke them
per aethera terrenaeque
are believed to stay on
manare credantur

ἐν νέμει σκιερῶ
ἐπὶ τε λῖν ἔμβαλε δαίμων
& Spartans in Mount Taygeto
sacrifice a horse to the winds,
as in Campo Martio, in October,
in Lacedaemon, dust to the uttermost
and at Rhodos, the sun's car is thrown into the sea,
rubbing their weapons with parsley,
Flamen Portualis
"intermortua jam et verba sepulta"

伯
馬
祖

And that Athelstan set up guilds there
kadzu, arachidi, acero,
not lie down

無
倦

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WILLIAM EASTLAKE

The Unhappy Hunting Grounds

When Alfred, his friend, and Baby, his wife, could be found nowhere, Alexander Bowman did not know where to look. But Buck did. Buck, a compatriot of Alexander Bowman's, was wanted in New Mexico so he found Old Mexico pleasant.

Buck had told Bowman that last night, after finishing a job in the back country, he had stopped in a bar and met an American who called himself a critic. That, Bowman thought, could be Alfred. Together with, Buck had said, an American girl who wanted to go home. When Buck described her, that, Bowman thought, could be Baby.

The village was quiet and very dark and the noise of Bowman's and Buck's horses was very clear in the narrow street. The houses were joined together and made a wall. Each house in the mud wall was marked by a piece of burlap door that was lighter colored in the darkness than the wall. On horseback you were higher than the low mud barricade and you could breathe and feel the cleanness of the quiet night. There wasn't any moon. They rode into a big square now.

At the far corner of the square, on the leaning mud wall, there was a green globe with the numerals 504. It was supposed to light up the sign, Casa de Las Santas, but it didn't quite make it. On the street of the cafe were abandoned several tired cars in junk attitudes, dangling Mexican license plates. Guarding the cars, that years since had had everything stolen, was a sharp and yellow-faced man who might have done it.

The car watcher was stationed under the green 504 globe with a piece of somebody's sweat-rotted underwear in his hand. He was stationed also in front of the only car that looked as though it might run. It was a sparkling chrome and pink, bucket-seated, disc-wheeled sport M G with New York plates. Along the fountain was a rusted iron rail where two wisely stupid-looking burros were hitched. The two men dismounted near the burros and tied up.

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The sharp-faced car watcher abandoned his M G and scuttled over to them, only a dim shape now away from the light.

"Guardo los caballos para un peso," the car watcher chanted.

"No," Buck said.

"Cincuenta centavos?"

"No," Buck repeated. "And if you try to steal them goats they'll kick your rear right through the cat house."

Inside it all went very dim. There was a good sized oval dance floor with orange and blue chinese lanterns strung across it. It must have been intermission when they walked in because the orchestra wasn't making any noise. It sagged on a platform in the rear, all pomade and teeth and once red jackets. When it spotted them it made a noise, dismal and without hope. It became a loud inertia; a wild chrome trumpet went off alone, sucked by a fat man and muted with rags.

They had to make their way along the edge of the dance floor to get to the bar that ran the long length of the other side. The girls pulled in their legs for their passage. They had made their faces into the universal female mask of Hollywood so that they could not be separated from the New York Times society page or the girls working the Via Venito. Their dresses ran from white hand-sewn cambric with lace, such as children wear for their first communion, to the latest J. C. Penney imitation of Dior and Mainbocher thrown out by some desperate drummer out of San Diego.

When they got to the bar the bartender was willing. He had his fingers spread along the bar and was waiting for them.

"How har you, Mr. Buck?" he said without working his lips, without moving the line mustache on his long, flesh-sunken face.

"Old Grandad," Buck said, getting up on the stool.

The bartender reached around and brought up the orange labeled bottle and a thick-bottomed shot glass.

"I drink it because it reminds me I'm wanted back in the Indian country under the name of Diamond Jack. My friend here is not wanted back in the Indian country under any name at all."

"He's some joker ain't he, Mr. ———?"

"Mr. Bowman," Buck said. "He's down here looking for his wife and a poet."

"Cuerva," Alexander Bowman said. "I'll have a cuerva."

"I used to work the Adolphus in Dallas," the bartender said.

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"High class place. You remind me of a customer. You want some salt?" he said, putting down the square bottle of tequila.

"No salt," Alex said.

"You want a gorl?" the bartender went on, watching Alex pour his drink. "We got a decent gorl thirteen years old come in yesterday. She won't even know what you're doing. We got thin gorls, fat gorls, gorls with no breast, gorls all breast. We got them with no behind and all behind. We got gorls from Mexico City, Acapulco, Havana and Guatemala. We got gorls that been to Paris two times and gorls what have been to Shanghai and Marseilles. We got gorls that never been out of this house."

"You got a piece of lemon rind?" Alex asked.

"Yes sir," the bartender said and he reached under the back bar and came up with a long curl of it that he twisted over Alex Bowman's tequila, the essence of it rising sharp.

"You want a show?" the bartender said with fake conspiracy into Bowman's ear as he leaned over with the spent lemon rind.

Bowman looked through the bartender and then he took his drink.

"What this is about his wife?" the bartender said, easing off it.

"He's looking for his wife and he's looking for a poet," Buck said, proud of it, still studying the picture of the stern gentleman on the whiskey bottle. He leaned across the bar. "He's a writer," Buck said.

"Oh," the bartender said and wiped the bar.

"Don't think he's out of no booby hatch," Buck said, turning the bottle to study the flourished signature of the old geezer. "He's getting paid for it. Some people gets a notion and gets interested in things that ain't been thought of—" Buck turned the bottle slowly, examining all of the fine writing. "We got to be broad minded," he said slowly.

The bartender looked at the ceiling a moment and then he gave up. "You want the show?" he said, getting on it again.

"A gorl?" . . .

"You want some more to drink?" the bartender finally said, with abruptness now.

"And some lemon rind," Bowman said.

The bartender put out a saucer with a long curl of the lemon rind on it in front of them and scuttled down the bar.

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"Remember," Buck said, pushing the bottle away, "I'm running a credit in this joint so take it easy. It's rough for a beat-up cowpoke to run credit any place so take it easy."

The bartender made his way back along the bar and Bowman leaned over. "I'm looking for a girl," he said. "A certain girl, an American gir—."

"What's the matter? Ain't Spanish gorls good enough for the—," the bartender said, looking up from his fiddling under the bar.

"Spanish girls are fine," Bowman said, spacing the words. "It's just that I'm trying to—."

"I know, I know," the wracked face of the bartender said, louder than necessary.

"It's that I'm looking for a certain—."

"I know. Sure. Sure. Sure. We all are," the bartender said, jerking his speech. "But why don't you go to Kansas? How would you like it if I came to your joint up there—?" The bartender's diseased face was righteous now. "How would you like it? What's wrong with a Spanish gorl? You think you're too good—?"

"Nothing. Nothing. Nothing's wrong. They're fine, fine, fine. It's that I want a certain American—."

"I know, I know," the bartender said, moving away.

"She's here all right," Buck said. "But take it easy, I'm running this credit."

"Alexander Bowman, I presume," a man's voice alongside him said.

"Oh," Bowman said, looking around at a man with a heavy mustache and small cheerful blue eyes.

"Charles Bentley," the man said in a clipped voice, extending his small firm hand that Bowman took, unbalancing himself on his stool.

"I reviewed your last book," the critic said, comfortably.

"They're ready. Your pals told me to tell you they're ready," the bartender came up to the bar and told the critic.

"Tell them to dash along. Tell them to go about their nonsense. Tell them I've found a writer."

"What you found?" the bartender asked, looking at Bowman.

"A colleague," the critic said.

"I think he is too," the bartender said, moving down the bar with the message.

"I must say," Charles Bentley said firmly and still fixing his eye

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on Alex as though they had not been interrupted, "I don't think you're finished."

"They're going," the bartender reported back.

"Good. Tell them to dash along," Charles Bentley said, waving his arm without taking his eyes off Bowman. "A couple of adventurers," the critic explained quickly. "Pretending to be writers. They've found an American girl now and are off to have themselves a time."

"What did you say?" Bowman said suddenly. "What have they found?"

"Yes," Charles Bentley said confused, and then with interest, "your last book—."

"No, no," Bowman said, moving. "You said something about an American—."

"I don't think so," Bentley said, worried.

"An American girl," Bowman said, touching him.

"I don't think so," the critic said, screwing his eyes in thought.

"But you mentioned a woman," Bowman said, standing close to Bentley. "Right here in this place. You said she was with your friends."

"Oh, no, not my friends," the critic said, defending himself. "I just tagged along for the ride. An excellent opportunity to study the Aztec culture."

"I don't care," Bowman said. "Everything is your business. I just want to get hold of that woman."

"Oh. And I thought I had got rid of the adventurers," the critic said coldly. "I thought I was in for a bit of a chat."

"All right," Alexander said heavily. "But for God's sake, man, first tell me where they went."

"They went thataway," Buck said drunkenly.

"I suppose anyone who still holds to Existentionalism is thought old hat," Charles Bentley said with some sadness. "We can't get a hearing any more, even in a bar. Still, I don't care to abandon my position, thank you."

"Listen," Alexander said, grabbing the coat of Charles Bentley. "You tell me where your friends went with that girl and we'll discuss this until we're both green."

"I'm an Existentionalist. Very old hat. Quaint," Charles Bentley said coldly and examining his cuff.

"No, you're not," Alexander said into the man's face. "Just tell

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me where they took that girl. You're all right. Make it very short and I'll tell you anything."

"Very well," Charles Bentley said. "If we in Existentionalism are quaint, what is Existentionalism?"

Alexander looked puzzled.

"It isn't," Bentley said.

"You've probably got something," Alexander said.

"I confess I have a weakness for lost causes," Charles Bentley said. "And I have a sentimentality for the prose of Sartre that you've probably missed. That's what I find so brutal about today's writing; they've taken all the romance out of things."

"Make it short," Alexander said, sliding off the stool and standing over Bentley. "You said you would make it short."

"Well," Charles Bentley said, gathering himself up in an academic ball and pointing his finger out, "If our position in Existentionalism is untenable how do you account for the fact that our seminal attacks on the New Criticism are causing it to become—what shall we say?—extinct?"

"We will say that you win," Alexander said.

"They went thataway," Bentley said, imitating Buck's attempt at humor and yanking his thumb toward the rear of the building.

Alexander looked at him a second and then made his way down to the only door at the end of the dance hall. It opened onto a badly lit, narrow and disinfected sharp hall. Then he moved down the crevice, catching the high liquid Spanish from the rooms until he stopped at one that emitted the jerking dissonances of English and turned the knob. Inside there were two boys sitting on something that served as a bed. They were dressed with the worked-at carelessness of university students. One had a round abrupt-nosed face; the long faraway face of the other might have been called poetic if it hadn't run to pimples and you hadn't run across it in the place you ran across it. They each wore identical corduroy jackets except that one was brown and the other, worn by the boy with the pimpled face, was dung-colored.

"Get out," Bowman said.

"We didn't know—," the brown one said rising. "Mr. Bentley had pointed you out as a writer. We didn't know you worked here. We thought you were a professor at—."

"A professor is the guy who plays bad piano in a place like this," Bowman said. "Now get out."

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"We're down here on ideas and cultures," the one who had not risen said.

"Well, they're not coming," Bowman said, holding the door open for them, allowing a Mexican pimp dressed in cosmoline to slide in.

"We don't allow argumentations," the pimp who had slid into the middle of the cell sang, gesturing with his little cosmoline hands. "We are part of the church. We are part of the building that was expropriated, and during midnight mass there are no argumentations."

The two youths got up and ducked out. "We don't want a scene," one of them said. "We wouldn't want this to get back to Pasadena."

"Nice boys. They're from Pasadena, down here with the professor. Good respectable paying customers. They're from P—."

"Pasadena," Bowman said. "But where is the girl?"

"There are many. We have many fine ones," the pimp said, making monkey movements, circling the door that Bowman guarded.

"Where is the American girl?" Bowman said flatly leaning his weight against the door.

"We got lots of American girls," the pimp said, his small ferret eyes darting, trying to figure Bowman.

"The girl from the United States."

"Chingarro!" the pimp said, grabbing his mouth. "She does not want you. She saw you sitting at the bar. You are too serious, she said. She does not want you." And then the pimp said, moving quickly, "Are you looking for a disappears? I am very interested in young girl disappears. Yes," he said, sliding to the edge of the bed, "I have made a study of disappears. I have made numerous graphs and charts. I was thinking of a book, a scientific one," he said, squeezing his oil can of a face. "The professor have suggested a title, Tempo and Mode of Disappears. The professor Bentley has to come here often to follow the adventurers because they have the transportation. They are supposed to be looking for Aztec culture in the Cordilla. The professor, too, is looking for culture when he is not following the transportation. El profesor says his adventurers are looking for culture in the gin so he have much time to help me with the book on disappears."

"All right, all right," Bowman said quietly, his wide back

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against the door. "But before you leave this room you're going to produce that girl."

"I'm going to produce a theoretical for you," the grease monkey said, making an antic motion from the edge of the bed. "It is this," he said with the confidence of someone underneath the car who has discovered something. "It is this; the most highest numeros of the disappears go into work. Work accounts for most of the disappears. Second are the insane." The pimp held out two brown yellow-streaked fingers. "The three," the pimp said, splattering out a third finger, "are the stolen. Those are the three highest mountains on the chart. Oh, many of the disappears are there. And the four," the pimp said, putting down all his fingers and splashing them on his knee, "are the places of mine."

The pimp took a long thin black object from his purple oil pants, touched it with a thumb motion and, like an electric light flashing on, there was immediately a curved, beautiful, whetted and honed-bright blade without any of its master's grease, pointing at Bowman.

"Why have you come to number four first?" the pimp said. "Why have you come to the place of mine first?"

Why don't they throw it, Bowman thought, like they do in the movies and in the circus? Why do they pose with it? The Jerry didn't throw it either. He posed there with it like this character and it is very bad for the health, posing with a knife.

"Why have you come to the places of mine to cause troubles?" the pimp said, still posing and working the knife a little, causing it to flicker.

"You just thought about the war," the pimp said. "I have what in Spanish we call presentimiento about such thing. Something I did reminded you about a situation of the war and you had a thought. When you handle as many young senoritas as I do you need presentimiento or you do not last long in the business. You would wake up one morning and they would all be gone. You must have presentimiento in this business. Girls operate purely on the instincts and so must myself. You must always be one ahead jump of them. You must have presentimiento as myself has it much."

But he is not dropping his guard, Bowman thought. He still has that knife cocked. He seems to have a noncombatant's fascination for the war, Bowman thought. I will try it.

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". . . So I tossed a grenade at this soldier," Bowman said. "Everything else was wet. So was the grenade but I'd had luck with them before when they were wet so I tossed him a grenade, releasing the mechanism and holding it long enough so that I would not get it back. Then after a big noise nothing about him was whole any more except the knife, a particularly interesting knife of particular interest now because it is exactly the one you are examining at this moment."

The pimp glanced at the knife and it was all over. Bowman had timed it as one quick lunge step with his right hand sliding in and grabbing the pimp's wrist as far forward as possible so that if his hand slipped on the grease he would have more distance to hold before the knife worked up to his chest. He caught the hand about where he wanted to, from a falling, pushing movement from the door, but his hand slid on the oily arm more than he had figured and he felt the blade hot along his arm and then touching the heavy muscle of his chest. Then it stopped; he had dug in at the elbow of the pimp. The pimp was still pushing, beginning to sweat, but he was light and soft and there wasn't much push there. He had gained everything from the grease, and now Bowman was dug in at his elbow and applying pressure.

"Amigo," the pimp said, turning his head from under and up at Bowman. "The arm of me is breaked."

"And now the other," Bowman said, shifting to the other arm of the pimp.

"Certainly I will get your disappear for you," the pimp said, trying this.

"That's fine," Bowman said. "Let's go," and he pulled the pimp up on his good arm and led him towards the door. Still holding the pimp's good arm he opened the door. The pimp walked as though his leg were broken, as though his whole side were smashed. It was as though a combination brothel and cheap perfume factory had been bombed out, played on with water all night and was now relocating without hope. Bowman stood at the door and the pimp sang down the hall in rapid Spanish. Nothing happened. The pimp tried again. This time something came out into the hall and slouched towards them. As she came through their door Bowman passed the pimp out.

Bowman went over and sat on the bed. Seeing her was quite a shock. Physically it was very much like Baby. The hair was cut

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shorter and there was all that makeup and there was a little more weight in the wrong places which the work would account for, and the brittle face lines and the wrong tilt to the mouth which the work could account for too.

"I thought you were someone else," Alexander said. "A girl from New Mexico."

"I'm from Hasbrook Heights," the girl said.

"I'm sorry to have taken your time," Alexander said, moving.

"Ever been to Hasbrook Heights?"

"No, but I'll try—I'll try to make it some time," Alexander said, going out.

"Don't make a big effort, Honey," the girl said.

Outside in the big room Bowman went up to the bar with the dragging walk of a man who has been beaten.

"You find your gorl?" the bartender said, placing himself.

"Tequila," Bowman said, pushing him away with a gesture of his fingers.

"Successful in your quest?" It was the critic, all smile and bulging kind rummy face. "Note 'quest,' " Charles Bentley said pushing his drink toward Bowman. "Connotations Holy Grail, Golden Fleece, that sort of thing. Hector, Ulysses." Bentley saw that Bowman wasn't listening so he broke it off.

"Seriously," he said, gathering himself around his drink seriously. "Seriously, was it she?"

"What's that?" Bowman said, looking at him as though he were left over.

"Was it she, old man?" Bentley snapped his fingers.

"Was it she?" Bowman repeated and then he said no, it wasn't.

"Then your cowboy chap was misguided?"

"Buck was probably drunk," Bowman said, taking the drink the bartender put down without looking at the bartender. "No," Bowman continued, thinking about it. "He wasn't drunk. It looks exactly like her but that's all." Bowman put down the drink.

"Certain?" the critic said gently.

"Absolutely," Bowman said, working his glass on the counter and looking around at where he was for the first time.

"Well," Charles Bentley said, still gently, "you know that oily individual who runs, shall we say, the amusement department of this place?"

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"I just broke his arm," Bowman said.

"That's pleasant," Bentley said, squinting, trying to test it, willing to have a go at any hypothesis. "Well, anyway, before his broken wing period he used to fly around some interesting theories. Let me say that they were not entirely untenable."

"Let me ask if you'll have another," Bowman said.

"Certainly," Bentley said, annoyed, and then with determination. "It's his business you know. After all, he deals in young girls, in what he calls disappears."

"He went into that," Bowman said.

"Oh," Bentley said, and then, "Well, do you mind if I make a point? You see I didn't think he had the capacities to deal with it, even to embrace it, but I think you do."

"Thanks," Bowman said. "What is it?"

"Did you ever think that she might have completely and absolutely disappeared?" Bentley said in a low voice and spreading his hands. "That she has become nothing? It is that the ME could not survive in the tensions of our time and she has ceased to exist."

Bowman looked at him blankly.

"You are familiar with the scientific method," Charles Bentley insisted. "We sometimes have to throw out what seems a weird hypothesis and then try to climb towards it."

"I can't climb that one," Bowman said finally.

The six people, sloppy on the platform, started to make a big noise. It was a tune, jerky and obscene as was their custom. But this was loud. Like the way they play when they want to drown out a riot, Bowman thought. He noticed the pimp now, limping in the shadows of the lanterns, going from striped shirt to sharp tie as though he were trying to organize a crap game or a murder, Bowman thought again. Buck came rolling up the bar now, possibly sober because he always walked that way. He walked as though each foot had to go exactly in front of the other but had to go around a chair first. He had a cat or a cat had him. It twined in and out of each step. It was a bright taffy cat and when Buck stopped at the bar it worked its flanks around Buck's boots for attention. Buck set the bright taffy cat on the bar next to Bowman's elbow. The cat sniffed into the drinks and rejected them, but he enjoyed the view up there and lay down slowly, turning

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into himself, looking noble, wise and quite pleased with himself and absolutely certain of everything as cats will.

"We do not have cats on the bar," the bartender who had worked at the Adolphus at Dallas said.

"I see they are fixin' to stomp hell out of you," Buck said to Bowman, ignoring the bartender. "I see also," Buck said slowly, considering the name he was about to say, "that you busted the arm of Roberto Jesus Ruiz Gutzman."

"Yes, isn't it amazing," Charles Bentley said. "It's rather like a Hollywood film, isn't it?"

"If you want to see the show," the bartender said, "I think you all better turn around in your seats. I think the young ladies from the choir are going to do a little number bare-assted."

Buck took out a bright pearl-handled and shining-barrelled six shooter that looked not so much like a gun as it did a prop in a circus. He leveled this thing, all sparkling and expensive, at the bartender.

"Drop that bat," Buck said.

"It is rather like a Hollywood film, isn't it?" The critic looked at everyone for comment.

The bartender dropped the thick heavy bat he held under the back bar. It was a sawed-off weighty end of a billiard cue.

"Where did you say you worked in Dallas, boy?" Buck said, looking down the beautiful gun at the bartender.

"In Dallas, at the Adolphus," the bartender said, very nervously, just able to get the words out. "That's all. Treat everybody nice, everybody fine."

"You always treated me nice," Buck said gently. "Turn around."

"Everybody. I always treat nice everybody."

"Turn around," Buck said and this time, although he did not raise his voice, he did not say it gently. The bartender turned slowly like a heavy barrel. Buck exchanged ends of the pistol and lifted himself up on his stool so that he brought the gun down with a whip-fast smash upon the careful, bald-spot-hiding hair-do of the man who waited. The man turned slowly around now again like a barrel, walking without movement of legs and tipping slightly. He faced them without expression, then all together everything within him folded and he went down like a fountain of water collapsing. The girls made one high female throat noise.

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They made this all at once and as though at a signal and then again all at once and as on a signal they flooded to the rear. They settled like a covey around the pimp who hung on the garish chrome and pink of the band-stand, his sparkling greased small head in purple nimbus beneath the paper lanterns, his wrecked side dangling like a marionette and jointless, his good side carrying its own weight with importance, supporting the good arm that held a thirty calibre, round-clipped Thompson automatic submachine gun pointing at the other end of the room.

"I am walking—." The pimp nodded the gun and tried again. "I am running a respectable place. Would you behave like this in your own home? I am only asking that you behave as in the home of your own."

"That's fair enough," the critic said, weighing it.

"Now if you will all move away from the mirror you are in front of," the pimp said. "It cost me American one thousand dollars."

"Lord!" Charles Bentley said, turning and looking at the mirror. "One thousand dollars! Would you believe it?"

"You don't believe it?" the pimp said.

"Of course I believe it," Bentley said, beginning to sweat. "At least a thousand dollars. At least."

"Take a few bucks one way or the other that about is it," the pimp said and then he said, "You other boys aren't interested."

Buck still held the gun, big, nickel-plated, built before factories, built before submachine guns or the thing that held it was thought of. He still held it, bracing the bright weight with both hands from elbows planted on the bar, held it absolutely motionless with a very fine sighting of a beauty mark above the pimp's left eye.

The Hasbrook Heights girl emerged from the hall, walking upright and fast through the pack around the bandstand. She walked now under the glow of the lanterns coming directly up the bar, directly up the line of fire, her arm extended over the bar to catch the first drink. About halfway up the bar she stopped at a fresh drink and downed it, drinking it without water and in one gulp and still standing in the line of fire.

"Chingarro!" the pimp said in a low voice. "She is my best girl. Chingarro!"

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"I'm an American," the girl announced, and she took another drink, pouring from an I. W. Harper bottle on the bar. She spilt it as though she had had many.

"You know—," she said after she had that drink and poured another which she held. Then she had another thought. "Put it on my tab," she said toward the Thompson-holding pimp. "You lousy greasy Mexican, I happen to be an American and God damn proud of it."

The pimp took up the slack in the trigger and put on a little pressure.

"They ain't Americans," she said, spilling some of her drink towards the three at the end of the bar. "Just Reds and Communists and Eyetalians. That one holding the phony gun in a cowboy suit is a God damn freak. I mean I'm sorry, cowboy," she said. "Why don't you find yourself a movie? Why don't you find yourself a television show?" She drank part of the drink. "I'm sorry. Why don't you find yourself a True Western Romances?"

A very nice type, Bowman thought.

She rubbed her good full hips against the bar easily and with rhythm. "I'm an American," she said, defensively now, "and in my room I've got a picture of MacArthur and I've got an American flag and I'm proud of it and I've got a picture of Marlon Brando who is a real man and an American."

She sat down now with the bottle, hiking herself up on the stool with the bottle and still in the line of fire. "I'm sorry," she said, looking across her drink at the three, "but did you bring your Great Books with you? I'm sorry," she said, sucking her drink, "but did you bring a cello, a violin? No, seriously, did you bring a set of the encyclopedia?"

No one thought it best to make a movement with the safeties of the two guns released. Everyone sat very tight and waited. Buck's big bright gun was well braced from the elbows on the bar. He wasn't using any muscles so he felt he was good forever. He would just sit there aiming the gun forever at the man with the Thompson submachine gun she talked in front of. The pimp wasn't doing so good. His body was wracked and he was trying to hold the submachine gun up with the muscles of his good arm and they were beginning to burn. His whole body was beginning to scald and the sweat was running down all cold and sickening

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and he was beginning to go dizzy and light in the head and sometimes he couldn't quite focus on the girl who kept yammering in a foreign tongue that was hard to catch. Maybe he better blast a path through her. The bullets would continue through her to the big-assed cowboy who wanted to go tough. And then the bullets would continue on into the mirror imported from Pittsburgh Plate Glass for one thousand American. That was malo. The expensive girl would be malo too and the killing would be muy muy malo. Vertigo overtook him and things moved that should not move at all. The bar assumed an S shape. He went all hot and then instantly cold and the sub-machine shook. Caramba, he told himself, I must begin something soon. He increased the pressure on the trigger. It would take three pounds to trip it. I must begin things soon. Chingarro!

She poured herself another drink slowly from the I. W. Harper bottle and then tossed the drink on the floor, holding onto the shot glass and she said out of the side of her mouth, "Some God damn greasy Mexican's been drinking out of this glass. The three little bears wouldn't put up with this crap. The three little bears were tough." She took another drink. "The three little bears got something on you three little bastards," she said, waving down the bar. "The three little bears were tough. That's the trouble with the States, nobody's tough any more. My old man was tough," she said, thinking about it and thinking about the audience. No one had ever listened before and now they all listened as though she were Greta Garbo or the queen of Mexico. They listened in tenseness and absolute silence. It was difficult, her face was numb and cold with alcohol but she smiled as an actress or a queen should when she was laying it on the line.

The taffy cat made a paw for the drink and missed. She patted the cat.

"Get out of the way of the bullets," the pimp said with effort, but the voice was weak. He knew he would have to do something right now before he passed out but he did not want to destroy all that property so he said it again, and because his head was light, this time he spoke to her in Spanish.

"Vayas aparte, puta!"

"Oh," the girl said, rising and falling the glass toward the pimp who dangled on the chrome bandstand with the Thompson sub-

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machine gun. "I'm sorry, but don't talk to me in spic. Oh," she said, her voice piercing, "don't ever talk to me in spic, you God damn greasy, sawed-off Mexican. Especially don't talk to me in spic when people are down here visiting me from the States." Her voice was in hysteria now. "When my three little God damn bears are visiting me from the States." She collapsed now onto the bar, holding the cat and speaking over the cat who wanted to get away. Her voice was mild. Buck still held the bright gun immobile beneath an immobile face, pointed at her breast but through her at the head of the pimp.

"Don't ever, Cowboy," she said, smiling and crying at once and stroking the cat who began to claw his way from her breasts in terror. "My very own," she said to the cat, low and warm, bending her head into him, and the cat caught her and ripped a fine line of red down her cheek. Then she saw the bartender lying very flat and twisted in back of the bar.

"It ain't that kind of a place," she said, the old hysteria rising in her voice. "Cowboy, we're running a quiet joint. Ain't we?" she said, turning to the pimp. "Ain't we," she said, rising and walking towards him. "Ain't we, ain't we, ain't we?" she said, until if she took another step she would knock the gun out of his hands and then the pimp pulled on the trigger and she went down in the big ripping noise of it, holding the dead cat, and then from a sprawled position and an unbelieving face she said, "That cat was the wonderfullest creature that ever lived," and she said all of it as a complete sentence without even her voice trailing off as though she could have said more if she wished.

Everything was perfectly quiet as the three men walked out the door. The pimp was down on one knee, listing badly. He had lost the gun through the vibration of the burst and his face was green and he was doing a bad job of crawling toward the gun. Buck came back and stood awkward and big in the doorway thinking and then he raised the big nickel-plated circus gun until it was as high as the pimp before it exploded and a charge of black smoke came out as it will in a trick gun. But the pimp rolled over real dead. Buck still paused in the doorway, allowing the door to close on him, then he turned finally and joined the others. Bowman was in the lead and Buck got only as far as the critic before he said, "Should I have done it?"

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Charles Bentley stopped and looked at Buck, his face pale now but recovering. He set himself and folded his arms. "Yes, of course, old boy. Of course."

"Bill Hickock would have done it," Buck said abruptly.

"Of course, old man," Charles Bentley said, feeling foolish but wanting to say anything against the awful silence of the streets. The streets had been silent since dark and now there was only the re-echoing heel of Bowman's boots coming back to them from someplace up ahead. The village that had been quiet before, now, since the shooting, seemed to take on a conspiracy of silence as though everyone had dug in a little deeper in order not to hear or see anything.

"Of course, that's exactly what he would have done," the critic said, hearing himself, but then, as though he had at last thought about it he said, "Still, she was what we might call a lady of the evening. I don't know what the films are forced to do in a case like that. It could be an interesting point."

"You mean she was a whore," Buck said, and then he continued in the same outgo of breath, "But she was a woman, an American woman, and he insulted her."

"He killed her," the critic said.

They continued to walk now, their steps ringing alone down the darkness of the streets.

"He done that too," Buck said.

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CHARLES GULLANS

First Death

Et in Arcadia ego

Now every trace of his mortality
Is loosed upon the wind like the light leaves,
Consigned to dissolution by the year,
And I cannot remember what he was
Though standing face to face with all he is
Or may be now, a brute inconsequence
Who once had form and purpose and a name.
He has no longer any need for hope
Nor for the brief and casual happiness
That comes to us. I linger in this death,
But the past moves into its future still,
And life but restlessly endures a grief.
The dead, like partial presences in us
That in the years ahead may sometimes find
A moment's resurrection, change as we
Who change insensibly to this demanding.
He is the first of all the dead to come,
Quiet, the victim of our need to live.

Mute residue of seasons, carnal form
That stays beyond the duress of the man,
I have not anything to do with you.
The casualness of so profound a change,
The change itself, is past my comprehending.
One moment known, then to the unknown hurled,
Beyond recovery, beyond conceiving—
The undefined evades my definition.

Calm and impenetrable vacancy
Toward which we thrust, I cannot find in you
More than the end of motion and the end
Of all I know. You leave me still to ask:
Having been here, what have I learned, what more
Than old mortality have I encountered?

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A Farewell

Love, what I gave is not mine to retract
Now reason binds and moves the will to act.
Give me no cause to feel regret or shame
Though once I called on you and on your name
As on a god and in devotion found
Much to be praised, nor thought, all was not sound.

But since our honor cannot bear the intent
Of lust nor lust survive love's discontent,
You know as well as I, I cannot stay,
Nor for the dubious charms of wit delay.
Come, kiss, and then we are at liberty
To do what knowledge makes necessity.

Though it were sweet, it were in us no less
Depravity of mind to acquiesce
And measure good by fleshed intensities.
What shall amend the heart's deficiencies?
Trust in the heart, but sooner trust the will,
And that once done, trust reason sooner still,
And in the end, find each alone is ill.

Autumn: An Ode

The late, retarding, and unsettled season
Works in the air with a distracting aim,
Loosing the heart from a distempered reason
To burn, like autumn, with low, sullen flame.

The year but deepens and protracts the lesion,
The heart surrenders to the time and place,
Leaves casual and dull with dull adhesion
Litter the garden beds, the green efface

As augurs of some final desolation;
But time delays, the year withholds the tides
That feeling needs to bring a consummation.
It is despair that, unresolved, abides.

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Autumn's despair is summer's pride unending—
O pride, that like the summer's wealth assailed
Seems fallen, but to new resplendence bending,
Your true perfection in despair is veiled.

Solicitude is vain! a vain allegiance
To all the dead and dying fills the heart,
Unsatisfied forever, with its grievance,
To wish and want and find no perfect part.

Desiring nothing is complete possession
Or perfect pride put on to outface life;
The final and irrevocable cession
Is death alone in which we leave the strife

Between the lusts of having and foregoing.
I would possess all in unmeasured part
Or all surrender to despise time's flowing
With perfect resignation in my heart.

Simplicity were but a last evasion,
Swift to destroy me; hesitance were still
In limited and incomplete persuasion
The calm of ignorance that bides its ill.

To one choice only and all else decrying
No perfect motion of my will assents.
To what end does the year perfect its dying,
The heart its pride? Aimless, the year descends.

O pride of life, O pride in resignation,
Your malice lingers in the season's breath,
Joy unfulfilled, despair in consummation,
This progress towards completion moves like death.

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HOWARD MOSS

Letter to an Imaginary Brazil

For Elizabeth Bishop

The pink tongues of certain flowers having
Only colloquial names (they are
So tough they might be used for scouring)
Stick out suggestively among green pods,
And the green's tough, too, though it surprises
The fingernail that frees its milk from fiber,
Running a white thread down the hand. One plant's
No menace, but from the plane, one sees
A writhing settlement that hides its danger,
Where snake and puma wrestle on a floor
Of sliding vegetation, and the macaw
May tear a scale off as loud and brilliant
As any virtuoso bending over keys
Of black and white—those colors missing here,
Where all is earth-green, earth-red, earth-brown,
And a sulphurous yellow takes the breath
Away from the breather, Elizabeth.

The waterfall, cruel as a kind of love,
Which, because it moves, is forced to cut
Some life away, is still a version of
The pastoral by being beautiful:
A dynamo that distance turns to song.
The mountain, too, has its deception—
Imagined stillness, though explorers lie,
Ironed out among its dark crevasses,
Where nature tries to wrest its forms from darkness:
Twisting, thickening spines and circles
Frightening the mind with a naturalism
That cannot weigh the difference between
A feather and a leaf. To fall asleep at night,
One thinks of nature as a human being:
The mountain a patriarch bending over life,
The waterfall a girl, stranded in a myth,
Whose tears have cut through rock, Elizabeth.

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Though what is still may move, and come to grief,
Though what is moving stop, no longer safe,
I see you in your house upon a mountainside,
Lighting the lamps. When you look outside,
There is the room hung up between the mountains,
Reflected on the other side of glass,
And, swinging in that double cage of light,
The mind flies out to objects of its love
And finds impenetrable forms and shapes
That you can formulate when you pin down
Each butterfly of thought upon your board.
You'll see, as fine as fern, a single tree,
Which, sprouting all its foliage at once,
Will seem to move beneath a microscope
Until each cell is separate to the eye,
Thin-scaled as life upon the width of death,
Who cannot read your poems, Elizabeth.

F. D. REEVE

Catechism

Who are the gods but men
That live the other side of graves?
They walk on our pain.
Will they descend to save
What men will not reclaim?

Who are the gods but men
Exploded by the birth of stars?
Their figure is fame.
Can they complete a war
Or the irrelevance of a dull name?

Who are they but poor men
Without a house or hand?
They work and breed in doom.
Do they understand
The dark delights of a dark room?

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Who are the gods but men
That stake the headless dead
To heaven or to hell?
What have they in their wooden heads
That sees each end so well?

Earth eats the graves:
None hears the buried pain,
Sees no one saved;
Dead, does each ask again
Who are the gods but men?

Old Age

Nothing is more complete than old age;
Men in winter sleep beyond morning or virtue,
As trees drugged to the roots stand still. Rage
Doesn't move them; they desire a different nature.

Old men sit in the sun and catch virtue;
They caress the past like a house without doors
Or windows. Dying, they welcome their nature;
Dead, they are the noise of the wind on the moors.

Trees grow graciously old, but men contract
Deeds, names, and disease. Death by nature
Like an irrational number can't subtract
From the ecumenical total of virtue.

Desire doesn't demand a particular nature:
The patient, like a lover, wants to mend.
His dreams, for all their great motives, do not touch virtue—
They are the sounds of a man at his wit's end.

Each figure assumes its appropriate virtue:
Discrete equilibrium in old age,
A debt for passion inflicted by nature,
Or the loss of rebellion, the release from rage.

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NORMAN N. HOLLAND

The Laughter of Laurence Sterne

HAMLET SAID to Yorick's skull, "Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come. Make her laugh at that." And Laurence Sterne took Yorick for his pseudonym. Coleridge, when he wrote of Sterne, said, "In humor the little is made great, and the great little, in order to destroy both, because all is equal in contrast with the infinite." Yet, despite these hints at Sterne's real intentions, most contemporary critics and literary historians consider him the prototype of a school of "sentimental" writing, whose only aim was the effusion of feelings, no matter how trivial the stimulus.

There is actually a dual aspect to most of the humor in *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey* that explains the wide variance between Coleridge and Sterne's later critics. Sterne's comedy centers on the hobby-horse, the preoccupation of a character on which he rides through life, encountering from his private little saddle all the happenings of his days. On one side of the paradox, Sterne pokes fun at his characters by making silly (but real) things suddenly pop onto this personal road and topple over both hobby-horse and rider. On the other side of the paradox, Sterne pokes fun at the serious obstacles of reality by having the character jump his hobby-horse triumphantly over them.

Tristram Shandy abounds in jokes of the first kind, for example, the episode of Phutatorius and the chestnut (IV, 27). Intent on the abstractions of theological discussion relating to changing Tristram's name, he at first does not notice that a hot chestnut has rolled into his breeches, but with sudden warmth, reality claims him for her own. Similarly, even the peaceable and militaristic Uncle Toby is disrupted when first Trim and Bridget (III, 24) and later a cow trample down his fortifications (IV, 18). The classic example is the creaking door which always interrupts Mr. Shandy's sleep in the very depths, as it were, of his philosophizing. "Never did the parlour-door open—but his philosophy or his principles fell a victim to it;—three drops of oyl with a feather and a smart stroke of a hammer, had saved his honour for

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ever. . . . are not the necessary causes of misery in this life enow?" (III, 21).

This is one side of Sterne's comic sense. It is not, however, always reality which intrudes. As often as not, the humor derives from the hobby-horse of one character riding into the hobby-horse of another. Walter Shandy and Dr. Slop, being firmly mounted, and about to discourse to Uncle Toby on obstetrics and the necessity of a proper birth for a child, are suddenly interrupted with: "*'I wish,* Dr. *Slop,' quoth* my uncle *Toby, 'you had seen what prodigious armies we had in Flanders'*" (III, 1). Uncle Toby's courtship of the matrimonially-minded Mrs. Wadman involves a similar collision of hobby-horses. He arrives for the long-awaited proposal at Mrs. Wadman's fortress, she being armed with all her coyness and coquetry. He says he loves her, is about to propose, but then he happens to glance in the Bible and, coming on the siege of Jericho, leaves Mrs. Wadman dangling from a rampart (IX, 19). This technique of Sterne's elevates the hobby-horse and makes it respectable enough to do some toppling of its own and, ultimately, it suggests to us the other side of his sense of humor, in which important things try unsuccessfully to tip over the hobby-horse.

The birth of Tristram Shandy, surrounded with tragedies, potential and actual, is significant, not as birth, but as it affects hobby-horses. Dr. Slop's preoccupation, for example, is his new forceps, carried carefully in a special bag, the knots of which, unfortunately, get wet. " 'Tis God's mercy, quoth he, (to himself) that Mrs. *Shandy* has had so bad a time of it,—else she might have been brought to bed seven times told, before one half of these knots could have got untied" (III, 9). Copulation is treated with the same proper (or improper) levity, even at the moment of Tristram's conception: "*'Pray, my Dear,'* quoth my mother, *'have you not forgot to wind up the clock?'*"

This side of the paradox shows most clearly, however, in the treatment of the three deaths in *Tristram Shandy*. The first is the death of Yorick (the parson-jester) and, of the three, it is treated the most lightly. Eugenius comes to see the dying Yorick and tries to console him by telling him he may yet be a bishop. Yorick assures him that mitres would not fit his bruised head; then: "*Yorick's* last breath was hanging upon his trembling lips ready

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to depart as he uttered this;—yet still it was uttered with something of a *Cervantick* tone" (I, 12). Sterne goes on tearfully to describe the grave: "—not a passenger goes by without stopping to cast a look upon it,—and sighing as he walks on, Alas, poor YORICK!" A black page follows, and the next chapter begins: "It is so long since the reader of this rhapsodical work has been parted from the midwife . . ." Even death cannot penetrate the Shandean preoccupation with memoirs.

The death of Tristam's brother, Bobbie, is handled in the same stingless way. Mr. Shandy is riding one of his pet projects at full tilt, that is, mapping the itinerary for his heir's grand tour. Toby, after humming over a letter and confusing its message with his amiable ambiguity, informs Mr. Shandy that his heir is dead. "My father stuck his compasses into *Nevers*, but so much the faster" (V, 2). Sterne devotes a separate chapter (V, 3) to the bereaved parent's grief, and what grief! " 'Tis either *Plato*, or *Plutarch*, or *Seneca*, or *Xenophon*, or *Epictetus*, or *Theophrastus*, or *Lucian*—or some one perhaps of later date—either *Cardan* or *Budaeus*, or *Petrarch*, or *Stella* [!]—or possibly it may be some divine or father of the church, St. *Austin*, or St. *Cyprian*, or *Barnard*, who affirms that it is an irresistible and natural passion to weep for the loss of our friends or children." Bobbie's death becomes merely a fuse for one more of Mr. Shandy's learned, abstruse, and hobby-horsical expositions.

The death of Le Fever (V, 10; resumed at VI, 6) is the saddest of the three, and Sterne's mockery seems to hold itself in abeyance; but only "seems." The first time the story is mentioned is when a tearful Trim promises to tell it to the servants. The corporal gets as far as a quotation mark, when Sterne rushes off to the topic of his mother. Although the episode is eventually told in a sequential and saddening way, it is told in a retired-military way as well: "—He will never march, an' please your honour, in this world, said the corporal:—He will march; said my uncle *Toby*, rising up from the side of the bed, with one shoe off:—An' please your honour, said the corporal, he will never march, but to his grave:—He shall march, cried my uncle *Toby*, marching the foot which had a shoe on, though without advancing an inch, . . ." (VI, 8). A mock-heroic Recording Angel closes the chapter with a tear. The moment of death is finally described, but even that is tainted:

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Nature instantly ebbed again,—the film returned to its place,—the pulse fluttered—stopp'd—went on—throb'd—stopp'd again—moved —stopp'd—shall I go on?—No.

CHAPTER XI

I AM SO impatient to return to my own story . . .

The melancholy end of Le Fever is quickly submerged in Tristram's peregrinations. Death, in this episode, comes closest to its usual blunt force, but even so, when examined, it is clear that between Toby's military mount and Tristram's literary one, the only person who feels sad is the reader and even he must needs smile at Sterne's mock delicacy.

Death comes close to Shandy himself, and it is here that Sterne shows most explicitly the relation between death and the hobby-horse. At the beginning of Volume VII, the autobiographer says that his spirits ("mounting me upon a long stick, and playing the fool with me nineteen hours out of the twenty-four") had never let him see the dismal side of life. Then Death knocks at the door: "Now there is nothing in this world I abominate worse, than to be interrupted in a story—" And Shandy resolves to gallop off and elude Death, which he does, exchanging his hobby-horse for a chaise. The next chapter finds him boated for Calais, where his amorous and amusing travels carry him across Europe until he joins a ludicrously bucolic country dance "till at last I danced myself into *Perdrillo's* pavillion, where pulling a paper of black lines, that I might go straight forwards, without digression or parenthesis, in my uncle Toby's amours—" (VII, 43). Ride your hobby-horse is Shandy-Sterne's prescription; death has no force against it.

This is the paradox of Sterne's sense of humor. Hobby-horses are ridiculed (in their vulnerability to little things, hot chestnuts, or knots), but respected (in their resistance to big things, birth, and copulation, and death). Sterne ridicules reality itself by juxtaposing it with hobby-horses that refuse to take it seriously unless it is a squeaking hinge; but since the hobby-horses are themselves ridiculous, some seriousness, even about death, remains.

The central symbols of *Tristram Shandy* show the same quality. The most obvious of these is the hobby-horse itself, childish, yet

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in some ways having dignity and worth. By attributing it to adults, Sterne suggests that man's belief that he dominates reality is as illusory as the child's pretense that he covers distance on a hobby-horse (and this sense of illusion is the theme of Lockean associationism that runs through the book). Yet, just as the hobby-horse gives the child a feeling of importance, so an adult's preoccupations and preconceptions shield him from the harsher facts of life that would drive in on him the reality that he is a tiny atom in an infinite and indifferent universe. Another double-valued symbol is Yorick, the parson-jester, who is clearly an *alter idem* for Sterne himself. The parson takes all things seriously and with respect (like Fielding's Parson Adams), even things like hot chestnuts and squeaky doors (which would have prompted an extended moralizing from Adams, as they do from Yorick); the jester takes nothing seriously, laughs at all things, even death. Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his portrait of Sterne, captured this contradiction in his character. The parson sits calmly at his desk, quietly serious in the presence of his papers and books, but the eyes that start from his face are those of a mad jester or a satyr. The man who sits at the desk could have written the dignified, competent sermon on conscience or the "bravo" sermon at the funeral of Le Fever, but even his sermons seem "as if he had snatched the occasion of unlacing himself with a few more frolicksome strokes at vice, than the straitness of the pulpit allowed" (VI, 11). "For, to speak the truth, Yorick had an invincible dislike and opposition in his nature to gravity;—not to gravity as such;—for where gravity was wanted, he would be the most grave or serious of mortal men for days and weeks together;—but he was an enemy to the affectation of it" (I, 11). Yorick's attitude toward gravity is simply Sterne's attitude toward self-deception.

Even the book and the reader are given symbolic overtones and pressed into carrying out the comic paradox. It is made quite explicit that the book itself is the hobby-horse of T. Shandy, Gent.: "What a rate have I gone on at, curvetting and frisking it away, two up and two down for four volumes together, without looking once behind, or even on one side of me, to see whom I trod upon!" (IV, 20.) As such, it is treated with mingled respect and ridicule like the other hobby-horses: "I write a careless kind of a civil, nonsensical, good-humoured *Shandean* book, which will do all your

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hearts good—And all your heads too,—provided you understand it" (VI, 17). The reader is likewise made both to laugh at the book and to admit its power in that it can force him to put away his common sense and acquiesce in its digressive, almost non-existent story. Sterne can even gloat: " 'Tis enough to have thee in my power—but to make use of the advantage which the fortune of the pen has now gained over thee, would be too much—" (VII, 6). In the same way, Sterne alternately ridicules and respects the reader himself, as in: "Had this volume been a farce, which, unless every one's life and opinions are to be looked upon as a farce as well as mine, I see no reason to suppose—" (V, 15). Occasionally, the reader is addressed in a reasonably serious way: "I told the Christian reader in the beginning of the chapter . . ." (VI, 34); more often he is treated by way of *double-entendre*: "—But with an ass, I can commune for ever" (VII, 32).

The most important part of Sterne's ridicule of his reader is the way the whole novel belabors the reader's "critical preconceptions." Sterne's style and method, even his punctuation, are linked by this technique to his paradoxical theme. Thus, even though his novel really does have a logical and detailed sequence of events (see T. Baird, "The Time-Scheme of *Tristram Shandy*," *PMLA*, LI [1936], 803), Sterne jumbles the time-relations to violate the reader's preconceived notion that a novel ought to have a time-sequence. He frustrates the reader's demand for relevance by innumerable pointless digressions or practical jokes in the form of half-finished stories such as those of Diego and Julia or the King of Bohemia and the Seven Castles; by black, blank, or marbled pages; by continual tiny references in the midst of a "serious" digression to the posture of the speaker: "Of all the riddles of a married life, said my father, crossing the landing in order to set his back against the wall, whilst he propounded it to my uncle *Toby*—of all the puzzling riddles, said he, . . ." (IV, 12).

The real basis for the charge of obscenity often levelled at Sterne is the application of this technique to the reader's own sense of propriety. Sterne makes the reader trip himself up. He says a long series of things which are ostensibly quite innocent (the extended discussion of noses in Volume III, for instance), unless the reader supplies another meaning, in which case the whole subject becomes prodigiously obscene. Where the subject-matter is intrin-

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sically racy, Sterne never really discloses it, but hides it in a welter of dashes and asterisks and double meanings, again making the reader supply the impropriety. (He may notice that the number of asterisks for the obscenity in question is exact.) In every case, the reader is the obscene one; Sterne is impishly chaste. Mrs. Wadman, for instance, is curious about Toby's potency (IX, 20). "—You shall lay your finger upon the place—said my uncle *Toby*." The reader rather naturally assumes that a certain place is meant, until Sterne finally shows that Toby means the place on the map of Namur where his wound occurred. Alternatively, Sterne treats indelicate subjects in a very learned and un-bawdy way, for example, by discussing the conception of Tristram in terms of the Homunculus, or his emasculation in terms of Spenser *De Legibus Hebraeorium Ritualibus*. Sex in general, and particularly impotency, is for Sterne in this technique what it was for the Jacobean dramatist, or what the *memento mori* was for the medieval scholar, a symbol of Coleridge's "little greatness" of man. Propriety is only a hobby-horse, subject like every other to being toppled over by small realities, such as the reader's own sense of the ordinary facts of life. As Sterne sums it up: "When the *extreams* of DELICACY, and the *beginnings* of CONCUPISCENCE, hold their next provincial chapter together, they may decree that bawdy also" (V, 1).

Even more than the charge of obscenity, the view that he is "sentimental" has thinned Sterne's literary reputation, particularly with respect to *A Sentimental Journey*. Virginia Woolf, for example, wrote in the World Classics Edition: "The chief fault of *A Sentimental Journey* comes from Sterne's concern for our good opinion of his heart. . . . The mood is subdued to one that is too uniformly kind, tender, and compassionate to be quite natural. One misses the variety, the vigour, the ribaldry of *Tristram Shandy*." Professor Ernest Dilworth, however, whose book, *The Unsentimental Journey of Laurence Sterne* (New York, 1943), is a notable exception to the conventional view, goes to the opposite extreme: "To the sentimentalist of yesterday, today, and tomorrow, as to the plain honest man, something is sacred; to Sterne everything is words, the immaterial substance out of which appear the clothes, the rattle, and the handspring of a jester. . . . The jester sets the pace and every word follows" (p. 109).[1] (We should

[1] Mr. John Traugott's recent book, *Tristram Shandy's World* (University of California Press, 1954), avoids the dilemma by emphasizing the Shandean satire of Locke.

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remember, of course, that for the eighteenth-century reader the word "sentimental" meant simply "with refined or delicate feelings" and did not have the pejorative value of effusiveness it has for us today—see Sir Herbert Read's essay on Sterne in *The Sense of Glory*.)

It is true that Sterne plays hob with sentimentality most of the time, for example, in the episode of the deceased lovers in *Tristram Shandy* (VII, 40): "—Tender and faithful spirits! cried I, addressing myself to *Amandus* and *Amanda*—long—long have I tarried to drop this tear upon your tomb—I come—I come—When I came—there was no tomb to drop it upon." In *Tristram Shandy*, sentimentalism is, as Mrs. Woolf suggested, only one hobby-horse among many, whereas *A Sentimental Journey* is devoted almost entirely to developing a dual attitude toward this one preoccupation. As such, Yorick, the parson-jester, is the ideal narrator: he can be serious (once in a while) and jest (in the guise of "sentiment") constantly, as, for example, in the story of the Ophelia-like Maria:

> And is your heart still so warm, Maria? said I.
>
> I touch'd upon the string on which hung all her sorrows . . . The string I had touch'd ceased to vibrate—in a moment or two Maria returned to herself . . .
>
> Maria put her arm within mine, and lengthening the string, to let the dog follow, in that order we entered Moulines.

The play on strings is Sterne's constant dualism, the intrusion of a real string in the sentimental realm of heart-strings. At another point, Yorick comes upon a man by the road weeping over his dead beast. "—Shame on the world! said I to myself—Did we but love each other, as this poor soul but loved his ass—'twould be something" (*Nampont; The Dead Ass*). This is bitter writing, and this is part of Sterne's attitude toward sentiment.

He laughs at it where it is directed toward some unrealistic, pointless, or fictional misfortune, but Sterne indulges sentiment where he feels it is a sensible emotional response, for instance, when Trim in *Tristram Shandy* gives his manual-of-arms version of the catechism. In explaining what "Honor thy father and mother" means, he replies, "Allowing them, an' please your honour, three half-pence a day out of my pay, when they grew old" (V, 32). We are dealing with hard facts and Sterne hardly laughs

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at all. In *A Sentimental Journey*, there are two examples of *bona fide* eighteenth-century sentiment: the first is *Le Patisser*, the second, *The Sword*. Sterne's only satire is a little sly laughter at the busybody quality that sentiment is apt to acquire: "It would be wicked to with-hold a pleasure from the good, in passing over what happen'd . . ." and this is a joke that smiles with, not at, sentiment and serves to keep it from exceeding the limits of common sense.

The answer, then, to the critical dilemma is that Sterne treats sentiment just as he treats every other hobby-horse. It is ludicrous when it can be toppled over by a trivial fact or remark; it has dignity and worth when it serves as a psychological protection against the harsher aspects of reality. The critical confusion exists simply because Sterne's technique is to develop his theme by playing on the reader's own literary preconceptions about sentiment, namely, his faith that an author will not be at one time both tender and facetious. Only a reader like Coleridge, who could himself both ridicule and respect at once, as Sterne did, could grasp both sides of the paradox.

In short, the tags of sentimental or anti-sentimental cannot define Sterne's dual comic vision. The crux of his humor is the hobby-horse, which can be the ruling passion of a character, or a reader's preconceptions about relevancy, time-sequence, propriety, or sentiment, but in every case is both ludicrous and admirable. Sterne's laughter at the hobby-horse is within the framework of classic and neo-classic decorum; his laughter with the hobby-horse is part of eighteenth-century benevolism, and in that sense only is he a forerunner of the romantic movement. He is far more closely related by his balance and synthesis of opposed modes of humor to the tradition of seventeenth-century wit. In using the reader's own preoccupations to create a mixture of refined emotions, good taste, or empathy, with laughter, Sterne fuses his theme with his eccentric techniques: he speaks to the reader through the reader. The mixture in the reader's own reactions is the very essence of what Sterne wants to present: the ridiculousness of both hobby-horses and reality, the paradox of the little greatness of man. Behind the face of piety, the skull of Yorick laughs; in contrast with the infinite, parson and jester are one.

[*This article is the second in a series of revaluations of 18th Century English writers.*]

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KENNETH B. SAWYER

The Century Plant: A Dialogue on Current Painting

C.C. (*Not so fresh-faced as one likes to imagine The Young*)—Whither so hastily, *cher maître*?

C. (*With something of the critic's squint, otherwise apparently normal*)—Off to contemplate the grandeur that is art, and in no need of company, thank you.

C.C.—Wot? Still at it, Olde Soule? At your age it's time to think about *living*.

C.—Man and boy, the paint pot has been a part of my life for none-of-your-business-how-many years. I see no reason to change now. You may join me on the Path to Righteousness if you'll just be quiet.

C.C.—Thank you, but what's the good of trudging the Path to Righteousness quietly? How will anyone know I'm trudging it?

C.—I fear you are a hopelessly light-minded tyke.

C.C.—Then seriously: what are your deathless thoughts on the state of painting?

C.—It is healthy, most healthy.

C.C.—What! With daily denouncements in the free press, not to mention the moral wrath of various highly illustrated periodicals . . .

C.—Your taste in literature is as deplorable as ever. Besides, all that is merely another symptom of health. Unpopularity at a certain level is a sure sign of vitality. 'If you can't trounce 'em, denounce 'em.' Not bad, as mottoes go.

C.C.—All the same, popular hostility is damaging to the psyche, to say nothing of the economy. The alienation of the artist in our time is . . .

C.—You're overlooking the *advantages* of alienation. By this date in the century, most serious painters don't give a hang for popular opinion. Naturally, they endure poverty for their indifference, and most of them are happy enough to get sincere appreciation—especially if it is for the right reasons. But the most important thing to them is painting; and to me—not a painter—it is the *seeing*.

C.C.—A limited participation in life.

C.—I dare say, but not a bad one considering some of the other cultural possibilities. The office at nine, the subway at five-thirty, a dry Manhattan at six, a Television Dinner at six-thirty, the latest parlor games at eight. Three weeks at Squam with the children in July; glad to be back at the office in August . . .

C.C.—'Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door.' I know, I know. It all has a very familiar sound, but *Kitsch* has *its* advantages, too. Frankly, I still have some questions about our period style, Abstract Expressionism.

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C.—So do I. What troubles you?
C.C.—Well, the 'Expressionism' part of it, for example. I'll admit it's abstract.
C.—Granted 'Abstract Expressionism' could be troublesome if one takes such labels too seriously, but I'd rather quarrel with the 'Abstract.' All painting is abstract in a sense—especially that with identifiable images. Natural forms—the figure for example—have volume as well as silhouette. On canvas, these forms usually appear to occupy third dimensional space; obviously, this is an illusion. They have been *abstracted* to occupy a plane surface. By the way, did you know that Webster defines 'abstract' as 'purloin'? I like the justice in that; there are more abstract painters than we had supposed.
C.C.—You're fogging the issue. What about 'Expressionism'? In painting, a style originated by Munch, and continued by Kirchner, Nolde, Schmidt-Rottluff, Beckmann, and Kokoschka.
C.—Did you take the Fogg Museum Course by any chance?
C.C.—No. Why?
C.—Forget it—just a fleeting thought. No doubt 'Expressionism' as a descriptive term dates from Munch or thereabouts. As a style, it is probably as old as Northern art. It seems to be based on organic line and mass, to a lesser extent on formal distortion. In painting, it has come to imply impasto and heavy color, although one finds plenty of exceptions to this. Abstract Expressionism is, *ergo*, a kind of art that uses the devices of Expressionism, but eschews its matter.
C.C.—Too simple, sir. Name some Abstract Expressionists.
C.—Still, Hofmann, de Kooning.
C.C.—Aha! What about Pollock, Rothko, Motherwell, Kline, Newman, Gottlieb, Stamos, Guston . . .
C.—They don't seem to fit, do they? Well, so much for labels. In fact, considering the range represented by these eleven men, I'm surprised that anyone presumes to classify them at all. However, the evocative power of a phrase is a tribute to human imagination.
C.C.—What about 'Action Painting'?
C.—No!
C.C.—'*Tachisme*'?
C.—Humph!
C.C.—'American-Type'?
C.—Perhaps we had better stick to 'Abstract Expressionism'. That, at least, conjures in the minds of a great number of people an image of some proto-painting, and I suspect that any common term can be a factor in the general acceptance of a movement. Actually, of course, Abstract Expressionism isn't a movement at all, far less a 'school'. The fact that a number of highly gifted artists began to reconsider the conventions of painting at about the same time may be of sociological interest, but it doesn't constitute a 'school'. A 'school' or movement implies a program, a common aim apart from simply painting

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good pictures. Impressionism was a 'school', so was Cubism. To my knowledge there has never been an Abstract Expressionist manifesto—not in the United States, at least.

C.C.—You think Abstract Expressionism began in the United States, then?

C.—Yes, as such I think it did, but it has international ancestors; not unusual when you recall the extent to which American art was indebted to European—particularly French—until World War II. The point is that Abstract Expressionism has assimilated its sources, departed *on* them and *from* them. It took what it needed, transmuted the elements, and emerged as highly original art. In general, I think it has surpassed its sources.

C.C.—Like the post-Dinard Picasso?

C.—Picasso has had rather less direct influence on Abstract Expressionism than most people imagine. His shallow space in the mid-thirties was an attractive idea, but he never made such a point of it as did the early Kandinsky or Mondrian. Matisse was more influential, especially to Hofmann, but both Picasso and Matisse are basically Renaissance painters.

C.C.—Whoa! Let's think about that for a minute. How so, Renaissance painters?

C.—Don't get excited. I simply mean that both sprouted from the Italian easel tradition: Picasso mainly from the Florentine, Matisse from the Venetian. It would be merely ludicrous to say that both have made enormous contributions to the modern sensibility. My point is that neither departed very far from the painting discoveries—composition, perspective, color relationships—of the *cinquecento* or earlier. Over-all composition, on the other hand, probably began for us with Tobey—who was toying with the idea as early as 1936—reached its maximum development with Pollock, and seems in line to remain a part of our technical vocabulary for some time to come. Don't misunderstand. Pollock evolved quite independent of Tobey, and, I think, far more complexly. I am simply trying to keep my history in order.

C.C.—The dialectic isn't exactly your strong point. You seem to be forgetting Monet, Vuillard, Bonnard, Turner, Cubism . . .

C.—You *have* been to the Museum of Modern Art this week! Certainly. *Nymphéas* forever! Monet is likely to be the discovery of the season. But a surprising number of painters seem always to have known about him: Still and Guston, for example—both legitimate sons, and Still, at least, is a taller man than his father.

C.C.—Nearly everyone seems to be talking about Guston's 'Abstract Impressionism'; you apparently think that it is a sign of Monet-ism in American painting.

C.—No, I don't—or, at least, not strikingly so. I confess that I found Guston's recent show less Impressionist than most of my colleagues did, and less influenced by Monet. Monet's significance to contemporary art has been mostly in composition and values, not paint quality.

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Guston's composition, for example, is far simpler than Monet's, and more conventional—that is, contained.

C.C.—You're saying, in other words, that contained composition is conventional composition?

C.—Sorry, that was a slip. The entire conception 'composition' is conventional. Something we accept with little thought no matter how absurd it may seem on reflection. It goes without saying that a painting exists within the boundaries of its frame, or, at least, within the limitations of its dimensions, just as it obviously occupies a plane surface. Traditional easel painting—and for that matter most mural painting since the Romans—has accepted the first view, and, curiously, rejected the second. Illusionistic space has been a part of the Western tradition almost since the tradition evolved; the imagistic premise required it. In abandoning deep perspective, Abstract Expressionism required a greater extension of surface on which to develop its ideas. The results have been twofold: probably more large paintings than at any other period in American art, and a totally new convention of illusionistic space.

C.C.—But didn't you say that Abstract Expressionists have abandoned the *trompe* of a third dimension?

C.—So they have, mainly, but the new illusion—and I had better admit here that I mean space in the sense of painted surface—works in a different way. Renaissance painting tended to *penetrate* the wall; contemporary abstraction *engages* it.

C.C.—Existentialism . . . ?

C.—You're not still subscribing to *those* little magazines? Seriously: Abstract Expressionism, instead of cutting apertures, offers the illusion of flat-painted forms extending where none actually exist. This is particularly true in the case of Still, Rothko, Pollock, and Kline.

C.C.—Why is that any better than perspective?

C.—I didn't say it was *better*. Good and bad don't have anything to do with it; it is a technical increment like any other. I do say that it has been used to powerful effect by some of our most important painters. At best, the effect can be one of monumentality.

C.C.—I've noticed that. Reduce a Rothko or a Kline and it loses a great deal.

C.—Reduce a Veronese or a Rubens, it loses, too.

C.C.—But not so much. Rubens and Veronese still sustain their formal interest.

C.—Perhaps, but I suspect you are thinking of the figurative elements. You still recognize matter and unconsciously locate it at the proper perspective focus.

C.C.—Which might furnish the basis for an argument in favor of collecting Old Master reproductions. Certainly one cause of alienation between painter and collector is the size of his canvases. They seem designed for museums.

C.—I don't think 'designed' is to the point. Painters work until they

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develop to their own satisfaction the ideas that comprise the painting. But your objection pretty clearly defines the general attitude about pictures. Most of us continue to think of them as objects to be framed and hung over the mantelpiece—as cabinet art, in other words. The persistent urge of modern painting seems to be away from the easel tradition, yet not quite into the mural; to encompass the wall without being a part of it.

C.C.—You must admit, however, that size has been a discouraging factor.

C.—Yes, and a needless one. A young collector I know has a large Pollock in a small apartment. He hung it from ceiling almost to floor. A very successful solution; the painting is unscathed by its short vista, and the proportions of the room are greatly improved. In fact, the entire apartment seems larger. When necessary, my friend moves a chair or a table in front of the painting. Surprisingly, that does very little harm: a picture of the size and authority of a Pollock can bear a bit of distraction without seeming the less for it. After all, our museums bury Titians in gilt and plaster without ruining them. I think my young collector has grasped an important truth about Abstract Expressionism: that it is not easel painting in the old tradition; that modern paintings exist as *presences*, not as windows.

C.C.—That's all very well, but the Modern Museum wouldn't do such a thing.

C.—The Modern Museum doesn't have to, and because of that has shown several first-rate pictures very badly—the Rothko, for example. Far Western architecture, low-ceilinged as it is, has made use of paintings as walls from time to time for years. Effectively, too.

C.C.—Far Western? Do you by any chance believe in the *'Ecole du Pacifique'*?

C.—No, but that doesn't mean it doesn't exist.

C.C.—An evasive answer—unoriginal, too. You don't, I take it, agree with Hubert Crehan that there is no such beast.

C.—Apart from one or two injustices, I think Crehan has offered a fairly accurate picture. Something *did* happen, particularly in the San Francisco area, between 1945 and 1950—something related to, but distinct from, the goings-on in New York. The war had ended; a number of mature painters were working around the California School of Fine Arts; there were several first-rate painter-teachers on the scene; the three civic museums showed a willingness to exhibit radical art; gallery-goers were, if bewildered, more or less sympathetic. It was a period, however brief, of excitement and sanity. The word traveled: San Francisco in the second half of the forties sounded like a sort of Byzantium of American art. Nothing there constituted a 'school' of painting, but all the requisites were present.

C.C.—French critics seem convinced that there was, and still is, an *'Ecole du Pacifique'*. How would you account for that?

C.—The French have had plenty of circumstantial evidence to support

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their view. It probably began to accumulate about 1949-50, when the vigor of the initial impulse began to exhaust itself in San Francisco. There are many reasons why that happened: Douglas MacCagy's resignation as Director of the CSFA wasn't the least of them; then, too, by 1950, most of the veteran painters working there were beginning to run out of school time on Public Law 346—the G.I. Bill. To remain painters, they had to find galleries, and New York was the place to look for them. But a few went to Paris, assuming, correctly, that there they could live cheaply, work in peace, and possibly build European reputations. Calcagno went in 1949, Francis, Lobdell, Kuhlmann, and a few others went shortly afterward. They didn't find the same preoccupations there that they had in San Francisco, but they worked hard at the *Grande Chaumière* or the Colorossi, and made a considerable impression on the young Europeans who were painting alongside them (the extent of the impression was pretty forcibly demonstrated by the last Carnegie International). Remember, in 1950, no major New York Abstract Expressionist had actually worked in Paris. The Californians were powerful personalities and ambitious artists; French painters and critics got their first full-scale prospect of the new direction in American painting from Westerners. Also, Tobey seemed to confirm the evidence.

C.C.—Tobey as The-Father-Of-Us-All?

C.—I shouldn't say so. I admit that he was working toward over-all composition very early, and I am surprised that he didn't exert more influence on the Pacific Coast. But the fact remains that most of the younger Westerners were beyond him in scope, at least, before they had seen enough of his work to be much affected by it. Make no mistake, Clyfford Still was the man who made the impact. Without starting an academy, he offered the first alternative to Cubism that the new generation could consider seriously. It is a tribute both to the richness of Still's creative resources and to the young people he inspired—and there is no other word for it—that he *didn't* establish an academy. He stimulated into existence something far more valuable—a fresh mode of perception. But Tobey, with his elegant Orientalism, was much admired by the Paris avant garde, which concluded, after an incomplete glance at American painting, that he had provided the initial impulse. Tobey was from the Pacific Coast, so were the first Abstract Expressionists to work in France, or at least a respectable number of them. *Voila! c'est une école du Pacifique.*

C.C.—I find it hard to believe that the French were willing to take American painting seriously enough to invent a history for it.

C.—This may be the genius of France—to recognize the genuinely advanced and to offer it asylum and prestige until it becomes acceptable to the home folks. I found the impact of American painting very real in Paris. So real, in fact, that the controversy over who first recognized it is still simmering. A number of influential critics have laid claim, Michel Tapié with perhaps the most justice. This, I think,

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marks an important shift in attitude. Whatever the European intelligentsia may think of Abstract Expressionism—and it has its enemies abroad as well as at home—they take it seriously.

C.C.—Do I detect a note of triumphant chauvinism in your last remarks?

C.—Emphatically, you do *not*. I've winced too often at McCarthy monkeyshines, blushed too ruddily for State Department Coca Colonists along the Seine for that. But painting is painting, and if the United States is at last producing it, I see no reason to be maidenly about it. Besides, out of the studio, art seems to join a most unnationalist conspiracy of values; it seems uniquely the creation of free men. Every age has had its private view of freedom, our own no less than others. Perhaps our most penetrating glimpse of its dimensions has been of paint on canvas.

VERNON YOUNG

La Strada: Cinematic Intersections

Who hides his fool dies speechless.
—Henri Michaux

FELLINI IS THE new princely name in films—Federico Fellini: seven syllables, like Vittorio De Sica, to be pronounced lyrically or fatefully. Associated in the immediate postwar years with the more widely known Roberto Rosselini and Alberto Lattuada, he has lately won recognition as a creatively important writer-director, yet the recognition is secure, and subject to revision even so, among Italian and French critics only. *Lo Sceicco Bianco* (*The White Sheik*), his first independent directorial achievement and the most artful Italian comedy short of *Miracle in Milan* with which I am familiar, was hooted down by political factions at the Venice Film Festival, 1952. It fared little better in New York City this April where, despite generally cordial notices, it was dismissed with arrant condescension by Mr. Crosley Bother, who keeps moviegoing safe for the film-page readers of The New York *Times*. A widespread assumption among entrepreneurs and exhibitors attributes to Mr. Bother the power of making or breaking a foreign film (exceptions acknowledged) in Manhattan, which determines its subsequent distribution in the country as a whole: not that he speaks with any authority demonstrable by reference to a film's visual or intellectual content, but that his unmistakable sincerity is so essentially middle-class as to be accepted without question by the multude in search of its own image. *I Vitelloni* (1953) was equally a

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slow starter in Italy, which obliged Fellini to sell the film outright, whereupon it unforeseeably became a national success, though it did not escape vilification in all quarters. *La Strada*, a Venice prize-winner, 1954, has proved either baffling or irritating to every British reviewer I've come across, while *Il Bidone* (1955), excoriated in Venice, was exalted to the rank of "masterpiece" by certain Parisian critics. For the United States, the latter film, retitled *Con Men*, will be the victim of voice-dubbing, that process clearly derived from the principle—Nothing alien is human to me. . . . All of which suggests that Fellini is a dangerous man, and makes one wonder if he mightn't be a great one.

In *The White Sheik*, Fellini, like the Shakespearean wag, uses his folly as a stalking-horse, under which cover he shoots his wit. A newly-wed provincial couple arrives in Rome, he to ingratiate himself and to support his husbandly authority with the official aspects of the imperium, she (secretly) to pursue a glamorous phantom, "the white sheik" of a weekly photograph-serial (*fumetti*). After twenty-four hours of misadventure, during which the stifled wife suffers infatuation with and then abuse from the preposterous "sheik" and his absurdly vulgar consorts, and the husband, distraught by her disappearance, winds up a harrowing night in the company of a prostitute—the pair are re-united in time for the climactic event of their visit, a Papal audience. Flustered, each uninquiring of the other but shakenly repentant, they march quick-step toward the Vatican. Tearfully the erring wife clings to the abused husband's arm, worshipfully declaring, "*You—you* are my White Sheik!" . . . Farcical in detail, directed with smartly interfused sounds and images and musical insolence, acted with a range of styles sardonically attuned to the subject (e.g. Brunella Bovo's wife and Alberto Sordi's sheik; but Leopoldo Trieste, husband, is wildly a creature of fun and pathos)—the film is basically terrifying, in more than its social ridicule. Only the Italians, I think, can produce comedy so piercing as to complicate our laughter with anxiety. A brief scene between Giuletta Masina (of whom more, *infra*) and a fire-eater, in a plaza at night, upset this writer beyond his ability to account for the reaction coherently.

"Neo-realism" has been parroted without recess to define the post-war II Italian novel and film. As a result, although the sociology of Giuseppe Berto, Vasco Pratolini and Carlo Levi, as well as the psychological masochism of Alberto Moravia, has received adequate consideration, in the U.S. at least, far less attention has been paid to the lyricism of Elio Vittorini; the film, *Bitter Rice*, was applauded or scorned solely as a melodrama; no one has yet observed the relationship of Umberto D's watch (to say nothing of his dictionary) to the unifying symbols in *The Watch* of Carlo Levi; Ennio Flaiano's superb allegorical novel, *The Short Cut* (despite paperback circulation five years ago), has escaped serious discussion. That Flaiano is also a co-

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scenarist of *The White Sheik* and *I Vitelloni*, and that De Sica and Zavattini persistently qualify their formal announcement of "social attention" with another plane of relevance, should by this time have aroused more than a suspicion that "neo-realism" will not suffice as a clue to the art of the Italian film at its best.

Fellini's short masterpiece, *The Miracle* (his conception, directed by Rosselini), will survive in the minds of the just as a more profound and powerful achievement than most of the war-protest films in the temper of *Open City* (another Fellini collaboration).[1] Those who recall its theme of ecstasy-in-madness will be better disposed to appreciate *La Strada*, if not *The White Sheik*, and in *I Vitelloni*[2] they will recognize the inescapable Fellini touch (unless I'm modifying the force of his co-workers, Flaiano and Penneli) in a brief interlude from the nominal action: a village idiot, left to guard a gilded angel stolen by one of the *vitelloni*, props the statue on a mound and seats himself twenty feet away to stare at it, enraptured and moronic. Its setting an Italian city of moderate size, not identifiable by this writer, *I Vitelloni* inscribes a saltatory curve in the lives of four young men—five are named, one never significantly differentiated—loitering at the reluctant threshold of manhood. The latent personalities which will infallibly overtake them in the daylight of legal maturity are less distinct to their sense than the fantasy image each has conjured for his ego in the mirrored halls of adolescence. Over a year's passing we watch the separate and in no case conclusive reaction of each as he meets himself, or fails to, in a trial by exposure.

Fausto, a would-be Casanova, is forced into marriage with Sandra, Moraldo's sister (introduced at the opening as Miss Siren, *enceinte*, in a beauty contest); his disgruntled evasion of marital responsibility takes the form of pursuing other sirens and evading labor, until his wife's precipitate flight reveals him to himself as an insecure boy. (The pathos of inadequate or perverted ideals is a major concern in Fellini's films.) In a sheepish frenzy of love urged by guilt (and his father's strong right arm) his story 'ends,' but we know by then that in all probability his future will resemble the status of the average male in his social world—that of a questing rotter who is a lost baby at heart. . . . The plump Alberto, satirical and happy-go-lucky, is nourished in his gaiety by dependence on his mother and sister; when his sister elopes unexpectedly, the shock undermines his bolstered frivolity, leaving him to face the stone-wall prospect of going to work and thereby laughing less often. . . . Perhaps the weakest characterization, because it is too farcically projected, is that of Leopoldo, the poet; his place in

[1] Torn soon after birth from its twin film, *The Human Voice*, by Cocteau, then removed again (largely through the influence of the unsleeping inquisitorial Church) from its loose fraternity with films of Renoir and Pagnol under the embracing title, *Ways of Love*, *The Miracle* is at present a smothered and outcast paragon.

[2] Literally "the sucklings"; in France, titled *Les Inutiles*, but The Unused would be a more appropriate reading than The Useless.

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the design is stronger than the bizarre particularities given him as a person. But fittingly, he offers his major effort (a rhetorical play) to an aging bravura actor, storming the provinces with a variety show. In one of the more characteristic Fellini sequences the aged actor, sparse hair wild and eyes bulging like a distraught prophet's, strides against the wintry blast of a seacoast area at night, mouthing platitudes into the wind. Leopoldo, mistaking this genial charlatan for the Demonic Muse, flees in terror when the old man beckons him to recite at the sea's edge.

Moraldo is the lonely one, always sympathetically detoured by the problems of the others. Sad because he has no exterior involvements of his own, or for reasons of which he is unaware, he establishes deep *rapport* with a small rugged angel of a boy, a *rapport* maintained with fearful tenderness never quite acknowledged by either. (Ironically, the nine-year-old is the only 'gainfully employed' youngster in the film.) Driven by a compulsion he cannot understand but must obey, Moraldo abruptly quits town on a train at dawn. There, at the station, like a bird or squirrel who, when you've given up all attempt at reaching for him, comes to your hand unbidden, the boy appears to bid Moraldo goodbye. "Weren't you happy here?" he asks, in a burst of annihilating candor. And Moraldo can only smile and shrug in wonder. The train leaves (its sound and movement combined with shots of the sleepers whom Moraldo is deserting without farewells) and the last vignette, one of those finales for which Italian and French film-makers seem to have special feeling, frames the boy, already dismissing the other's melancholy as irrelevant to his own fledgling survival, walking away down-track, balancing himself on the single rail, greeted by arriving workmen.

Narrated with an almost novelistic abundance of detail, the film is seldom allowed to relinquish its visual melody of the five. Arms linked abreast, the wastrels dance down the street at night, or split up and pair off (Moraldo always odd man) to race each other or to dawdle at shop windows, kick empty cans or wolf-strategize a startled girl. Contemplative, they watch, from a breakwater, the relentless waves; fretful, they sip, at a sidewalk cafe. The oceanic background, prefigured in *The Miracle* and *The White Sheik*, unequivocally employed in *La Strada*, is moderately thematic here: the film opens on a beach casino; Alberto first discovers his sister with her illicit lover at the beach; the absurd poet flees from the risks of art by the sea's verge, and by the sea Fausto meets again the seductive woman, for whom he had once left Sandra in a movie house, who tells him she is his fate. (Literally she isn't; confronted by the climactic opportunity, Fausto turns away, remorsefully seeking the other Miss Siren, now but an abused wife.)

And always the distance, behind the lonely, short-sighted figures of men: the sea, the railroad track, the street—*la strada*. Alberto comes home from a masquerade ball in the grey hours, drunk and maudlin

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(supported by the loyal Moraldo), to encounter his sister eloping at this incongruous moment (his fat body is attired grotesquely in woman's clothing); before he can explain or receive explanation, the girl cries a quick regretful farewell, jumps into the waiting car and is driven out of sight. Stunned, but barely sober enough to grasp his sudden desolation, he sways in Moraldo's arms and we are given a long view of the otherwise empty road, the vanishing car and, in the left foreground, the transvestite rear end of the ludicrous Alberto.

From the actuality of the Italian middle-class family's tyrannical cohesion and bankrupt aims, Fellini derived the social substance of his unspectacular milieu. But he is a film poet, which is to say one whose images mean more than meets the eye. To a poet the social situation is never a closed system; the phenomenal opens to vistas, terrible or inceptive. *I Vitelloni*, circumscribed by its modest subject of incomplete illumination, none the less flashes with light from sources beyond the circle. Fellini's direction of this film was supple and alert, as if he were restraining impulses more intensely lyrical and searching for conveyances more stark.

La Strada is the consequent testimony of such a deduction: the most uncompromising fable yet evoked from the material of Italian naturalism, a mordant reproval of the deaf who have missed the deeper resonance in its voice. Not *cinematically* remarkable, for it is directed and photographed with a conventional technique, the film is metaphysically astounding; longitudes of implication extend as awesomely as the ocean, on the strand of which it begins and ends. As a crystalline conception it belongs with much of the pure literary art of our time—with *Death in Venice*, for instance, or *The Man Who Died*, with a lyric by Jeffers or Yeats. Like any deeply felt and realized symbol, *La Strada* is at once nuclear and radiating; within its deceptively simple span, an eternal pattern and a prophecy are established. Since my superlatives have already been disputed, in much the same spirit as that which denied the complexity of *Rashomon*, a somewhat detailed synopsis of *what happens in La Strada* may be in order; I trust that a measure of editorial underlining will not be out of order.

The opening scene presents a dismayed household by a remote seashore. Zampano, a consummate physical specimen of Hobbes' Man—nasty and brutish, if not short—has offered to buy the services of Gelsomina to assist his 'act,' wherein he struts fearsomely in a circle before bucolic audiences, swallows fire and bursts a linked chain by expanding his chest within its constriction. As a sister purchased many years before by this same Zampano had never returned—she died somewhere, the *fauve* explains with a grunt—Gelsomina, a clown of a creature, scarcely verbal, dressed in sexless clothing, with feet like those of a duck, is idiotically uncertain whether to laugh or cry when sold by her family into the bondage of this stranger who tours the back-country with a motor-cycle-driven wagon. But after facing the ocean, to commune in some fashion we are not permitted to see, the

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girl departs with her master who thereupon ignores her existence, giving her only the recognition of abuse because she fails readily to learn her part in his performance. Gelsomina is required to prepare his 'act' by the loud and rhythmic proclamation, "*Zam*-pa-no is here!", and then to accompany the chain-breaking with a drumbeat crescendo. She learns slowly, and Zampano's brutal impatience ill elicits her concealed talents.

Insensible to the female under the shapeless rags, to the eyes mischievous, eager, luminous and occult, to the wild invention of the clown-girl's fantastically expressive motions, Zampano takes his pleasure from whores and bottles, while Gelsomina waits in a world of her own, imbecile and germinating, alternately downcast and irrepressible. When Zampano snores drunkenly on the ground by the covered wagon outside a village, she dance-struts over the bleak campagna and picks flowers, watched by a small astonished girl. Though she and Zampano are leaving the spot immediately, she plants tomato seeds, and this gesture, more than any, incites the man's jeering contempt. Unable to stand his cruelty and his indifference, Gelsomina runs away, following three single-file trumpet-and-fife players on a country road. Once in the city, she is lost and amazed in a louder music, the pomp and bell-ringing of a church processional, and a street carnival where she is entranced by an equilibrist wearing paper wings, who eats spaghetti from a table on a high-wire above the crowd. Teased and made drunken by wastrels in a windy trash-blown square at night, she is reclaimed, with violent blows and curses, by the pursuing Zampano.

In dire need of a better income, Zampano begrudgingly attaches his 'act' to a circus, where the equilibrist Matto (crazyhead) is also a featured performer. This "fool" (Gelsomina's term for him) has known Zampano before and delights in taunting the brute's vanity and his sluggish strength. But Gelsomina he finds comically beguiling and teaches her, as part of a farcical ground-act he is working out, to blow a sentimentally haunting air on a bugle. When his derisive merriment lands him and the outraged Zampano in gaol for brawling, he is dismissed by the circus company. Before going his way he tries to coax Gelsomina, stubbornly waiting for Zampano, into going with him, but she is unable to convince him that she is useful for anything—even for loving. She is sure that Zampano really needs her but that anyone more particular could not. Bidding her look to her own value and blithely discoursing on his own mortality, Matto dances out of the scene. The circus group, after offering to keep Gelsomina but not Zampano, resigns the obdurate girl to the mercy of her choice. Zampano is released from gaol, the travelling partnership is resumed. They reencounter Matto by the roadside, trying to mend his broken-down car. Zampano, to avenge past insults and from resentment of the fool's unique influence over Gelsomina, attacks him with a savagery which is fatal to the equilibrist. Panic-stricken and disgusted at the bad

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luck invoked by his uncontrolled strength, Zampano hides the fool's body and his wrecked car under a bridge (Matto's only words in this scene, uttered with weary surprise, are "He broke my watch!").

Gelsomina now loses the little articulation she is mistress of; she babbles inarticulate terror and to remove her from the locale of the crime Zampano has to trounce her as if she were a mule. Paralyzed by fear and confusion, she subsequently refuses to sleep under the tarpaulin with the fleeing Zampano, preferring to make her bed on the ground in sight of the stars. Her presence in the 'act' is futile; she can no longer open her mouth to cry, "*Zam*-pa-no is here!", or bring her quavering hands to beat the drum; instead she makes anguished animal noises and succeeds only in whimpering brokenly, "The Fool is hurt! The Fool is hurt!" . . . Early one morning, on the summit of a snowcovered pass, as she sleeps by the embers of a fire she has made, Zampano drives away.

Five years go by. Zampano, his hair greying, still treads his circle, threatening dangerous feats to mildly curious villagers. Drumless he struts; transparently his confidence has left him. In his idle hours he drinks himself senseless and is thrown out of taverns. . . . Passing a house one day where a woman hanging out sheets whistles a tune which he remembers as the one taught by the fool to the clown, he asks the woman where she learned it. She tells him that the girl who sang that tune had once stayed in her house, but she was ailing and had soon died. In a drunken daze, Zampano staggers to the beach. There he collapses, to stare hopelessly at the encroaching waves and to dig in a tormented stupor at the foundationless sand. He lifts his head like a wounded animal to scan the infinitely remote and empty sky. The waves roll in. . . .[3]

[3] Something, if only by way of parenthesis, should be said at this point to extol the fabulous performance of Fellini's wife, Giuletta Masina, as Gelsomina. The obvious comparisons will have already been made, for this woman is patently linked with the great clowns of repute and her art must be apprehended, not subsumed, by the relation it bears to the art of Chaplin or Barrault or Marceau. Her miming goes through vicissitudes of movement in this film; the more Gelsomina is needed, the less strictly puppet-like her physical reactions. After the fool has been murdered, she becomes altogether limp, human but no longer taut, drifting towards catalepsy. Yet it is the interior spirit which Signora Fellini expresses with such terrible veracity, sometimes through a stylized mockery of pain or joy that pierces like a knife: the way she walks blindly to the middle of an expanse of wall and stands there as if she were in a corner; her manner of sinking to the ground when crushed, using no more circumference than she needs to squat in; her furtive, metronomic eye-movements when experiencing something, grave or gay, which she would like to share with an audience that is never looking at her. Above all, she illustrates accurately this profound interpretation of the clown's facial singularity by André Suarès (from *Yorick. An Essay on the Clown. Fragment.*): "One looks at the mouth or the cheek of the clown as one looks at the brow of another man. Frequently, the mouth is the brow of a farce . . . Many children have the same expression: they laugh while crying and cry while laughing. But the will has nothing to do with this. The mind is absent . . . The grimace's hesitancy between laughter and weeping is the principle of an aesthetic theory" (*Verve*, 1-4, Jan-Mar 1939).

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Since action, in the classical canon, confirms the qualitative nature of the plot, my rehearsal of the action in *La Strada* has been offered as a guide to the integrity of its composition.

From the one foot of water into which they have plunged, the performing seals of Social Outlook (who bark and clap flippers only when promised a literal fish) have retrieved the discovery that *La Strada*, like *Umberto D*, has something to do with "problems of communication." Indeed it has. Very likely it would yield a wealth of analyzable (or unanalyzable) problems for classification by the tools of Motivational Research. . . . Beyond the reach of death, McCann Erickson and David Riesman, to say little of the English, *La Strada* is nothing less than a rite of passage, a vision of perennially failing pig-man.

Zampano is *here*, at the center of a debased culture once again: a spiritually abandoned savage who, trudging in a circle, makes a show of breaking voluntarily assumed chains—his destiny to burrow at last in shifting sand with the tide coming in and the sky bereft of illusion, having rejected the Clown and destroyed the Fool in himself.

Reviews

ANTHONY HECHT

Poetry Chronicle[1]

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS appears before us again with all his honors on him, having received important awards, having been greatly praised; but yet no more than he deserves. And what may a poor reviewer do, coming to this book a year after its publication, to add to the vast approval? Williams may well have a new volume on the presses by the time these words appear. But I don't apologize for myself or THE HUDSON REVIEW. Let me remind those who got *Journey To Love*

1 JOURNEY TO LOVE, by *William Carlos Williams*. Random House. $3.00. SELECTED POEMS, by *Adam Mickiewicz*. Noonday Press. $3.00. A LETTER FROM LI PO & OTHER POEMS, by *Conrad Aiken*. Oxford. $3.50. ONE FOOT IN EDEN, by *Edwin Muir*. Grove Press. $1.00. AS IF, by *John Ciardi*. Rutgers Univ. Press. $3.50. VILLA NARCISSE, by *Katherine Hoskins*. Noonday Press. $3.00. PREFABRICATIONS, by *Josephine Miles*. Indiana Univ. Press. $2.75. AN AMERICAN TAKES A WALK, by *Reed Whittemore*. Univ. of Minnesota Press. $2.75. A WORLD OF SAINTS, by *Thomas Cole*. Editions Imagi. $2.50. THE SOURCE & OTHER POEMS, by *Katherine Watson*. Oxford. $1.40. FABLES AND CEREMONIES, by *Winthrop Palmer*. (No publisher or price given.) THINGS OF THIS WORLD, by *Richard Wilbur*. Harcourt, Brace. $3.00. DELTA RETURN, by *Charles Bell*. Indiana Univ. Press. $2.75. POEMS: NORTH & SOUTH—A COLD SPRING, by *Elizabeth Bishop*. Houghton, Mifflin. $3.50. IN THE WINTER OF CITIES, by *Tennessee Williams*. New Directions. $3.50.

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when it came out to take it down off the shelf again and see how good it is. And to anyone who was out of the country or asleep at the time, let me recommend that you get a copy and read it immediately. I will not try to tantalize you by quoting selected "goodies." Williams' poems at their best, and these are among the best, have an integrity that cannot be conveyed by random quotes. And most of these are too long to quote in full; one of them, a work of extraordinary beauty and depth of feeling, called "Asphodel, That Greeny Flower," runs to about 44 pages. I would be tempted to single out others ("The Pink Locust" and "The Sparrow") for comment, were it not that the reader might suppose that the other poems were less deserving. The plain truth is that this is a book of poems so good that any American poet, living or dead, would be proud to have written it.

Quite some years ago Williams wrote the following:

BETWEEN WALLS

the back wings
of the

hospital where
nothing

will grow lie
cinders

in which shine
the broken

pieces of a green
bottle.

When I first read it, I didn't like it; and in trying to figure out why, I said to myself something of this sort: "It's all very well to laugh at the Romantic idiocy that only trees and flowers and shepherdesses are beautiful, and it's a good thing to get away from sticking maxims and cosmic generalities onto the ends of poems, but there is something very smug in the tone of this. He seems to be saying, 'I can see beauty anywhere, and that's what makes me a poet; it's no struggle at all; I just notice things, others don't.' Indeed, this is the case with any purely imagistic poem, operating without metaphor or moral commentary. It's straight observation, and has an air of self-congratulation about it. And if the whole thing is a metaphor, what does it refer to? Life? But that was supposed to be like a dome of many-colored. . . ." But in the midst of my reflections, a band of angels who have Dr. Williams under their special care, would be heard answering in chorus to this effect: "It's just like you fat-headed, academic critics to try to see more in a poem than is actually there. Give the man a chance, read more of his work; when you get to know him you'll find him *out-spoken, good-hearted, generous, fresh, sympathetic, enthusiastic, spontaneous, open,*

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impulsive, emotional, observant, curious, rash, courageous, undignified, unaffected, humanitarian, experimental, empirical, liberal, secular, and *democratic.*" I wrestled with these angels on and off for years, reading more Williams in between, and happily consenting to all the adjectives; but I still felt the same way about "Between Walls." I mention it here because Williams himself has referred to it in the course of one of the poems in the present volume, and has given it, in the new context, a new value and significance. I'm glad he wrote it in the first place so that he could use it so effectively here. He has redeemed it from the past, and that is itself the theme of the "Asphodel" poem. And nothing bears greater testimony to his growth as a poet than the wonderful emotional range and depth of the present work as compared with the earlier.

Adam Mickiewicz will not mind being reviewed late, partly because he has achieved classic stature in his native Poland, and partly because he's dead. His book, commemorating the centenary of his death, is edited with an introduction by Clark Mills, and includes a critical appreciation by Jan Lechon; this comes to 63 pages of prose commentary, or a little more than half the book. But it's useful to have such information about a poet who is understandably almost unknown in this country. He was a protean, romantic figure: by turns a Don Juan, a teacher, a newspaper editor, a religious mystic, and in his zeal to liberate his country from Russian oppression, the creator of a legion of Polish exiles, which he rallied to Constantinople, where he died at the age of 57 in 1855. He has been translated by Pushkin, Mérimée, and Mazzini. George Sand said that a scene in one of his works was "of a kind that neither Byron nor Goethe nor Dante could have created." Victor Hugo said, "To speak of Mickiewicz is to speak of the beautiful, the just, the true. . . ." Balzac, beholding him for the first time, said "Ecce homo!"

The second part of the book is devoted to selections from his lyrics, excerpts from his epic works, meditations and maxims, rendered into English by W. H. Auden, Louise Bogan, Babette Deutsch, Robert Hillyer, William Jay Smith, Rolfe Humphries, Daniel G. Hoffman, and Seldon Rodman, among others. And here the difficulty begins, for hardly any of these poets know Polish. They worked for the most part from "exact" prose cribs prepared by Polish scholars and linguists, who added helpful notes and comments for the benefit of the "translators." The result is hard to judge, complicated not a little by the fact that I have no Polish either, and cannot speak for fidelity. But it is even more complicated than that. Mickiewicz, at one time trying to create a popular Polish poetry, deliberately imitated the ballads of Sir Walter Scott, and you can imagine how hard it is to imitate a Pole imitating Scott when you have no clear idea what the Pole sounds like. The translations do convey a sense of the man's vitality and humor, but on the whole, regrettably, they are dull, conventional and lifeless. Auden's

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contribution seems written in the language of opera. Most of the others are less interesting. I am sorry to have to say so. If Mickiewicz' poetry is characterized by a combination of "absolute simplicity with unique word-combinations and musical effects," as the introduction states, little more than the simplicity at its most pedestrian level gets across to the reader.

Conrad Aiken's *A Letter From Li Po & Other Poems* contains seven long poems; the title-poem, which is divided into twelve parts, and which states the leading themes that recur later in the book, being the first and the longest. One of the themes is poetry itself, not an uncommon subject in modern verse, and the general idea seems to be that the poet creates reality through his imagination and gives it substance in his words. This leads to a lot of heady philosophizing about what is real and what is imaginary. ("Did Chouang dream he was a butterfly?/ Or did the butterfly dream Chouang? If so[2]/ why then all things can change, and change again,/ the sea to brook, the brook to sea, and we/ from man to butterfly; and back to man." Or, "Which is which?/ The poem? Or the peachtree in the ditch?/ Or is all one? Yes, all is text, the immortal text,/ Sheepfold Hill the poem, the poem Sheepfold Hill,/ and we, Li Po, the man who sings, sings as he climbs,/ transposing rhymes to rocks and rocks to rhymes.") Moreover, given this theme, it is hard to avoid noticing that the poem occasionally sounds like the tamer parts of Wallace Stevens.

> *Yet to spell down the poem on the page,*
> *Margining her phrases, parsing forth*
> *the sevenfold prism of meaning, up the scale*
> *from chicory pink to blue, is to assume*
> *Li Po himself: . . .*

But I think Aiken resembles no other poet so much as he resembles Whistler and the Impressionist painters. There is a kind of soft-focus, a dimness in which things are seen, and the palpable objects of the poem are valued not so much for themselves as for the ambiance they create. This leads to synaesthesia ("O and the music, too, of landscape lost," or "The star . . . trills through the sunset like a bird") and to a concentration on what might be called a musical level of discourse. Now Aiken's music has been much noticed by his admirers, and it may well be that I have a tin ear, but it seems to me that when he does not sound derivative of Stevens, Pound, and Eliot, he makes the most appalling blunders.

> *Come away*
> *for we have front row seats at the latest play,*
> *The Lilies of Gomorrah, The Bells of Sodom,*
> *and we will save our sorrows till tomorrow.*

[2] What can he mean by "If so"?

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As the fellow says in another play, You might have rhym'd. The question here seems to be, is this supposed to be witty, or did he first write the final couplet so that Gomorrah and tomorrow rhymed, and then, deciding that this was really going too far, simply shifted the terms of the next to last line and hoped nobody would notice? Anyway, this sort of music bothers me; and it is coupled with another kind involving puns ("Evening, which evens all things." ". . . melts the last sickle of pale ice: . . .") that I find even less digestible. But the key thing about these poems is that they are all ruminative, in their degree; in fact, I can think of no poetry that is less dramatic. I agree that it is hard to get a sense of drama into a reflective poem, but Keats and Wordsworth, among others, have been successful at it. But here nothing happens or ever happened in the past that is as interesting to the poet as his own cogitations; and the pace is so leisurely as almost to suggest indifference. Needless to say, I don't regard this book as representative of Aiken's best work; but if it is objected that I am obtuse to his wit and intelligence, I must ask who the joke is being played on in the lines that end Part V of the title-poem:

> *It is the self becoming word, the word*
> *becoming world. And with each part we play*
> *we add to cosmic* Sum *and cosmic sum.*
> *Who knows but one day we shall find,*
> *hidden in the prism at the rainbow's foot,*
> *the square root of the eccentric absolute,*
> *and the concentric absolute to come.*

On the assumption, I take it, that you can't have too much of a good thing, the Grove Press has published "*One Foot In Eden*, a new volume of poems by Edwin Muir," without bothering to say that nine of these appeared previously in the same poet's *Collected Poems* from the same publisher; and I have no way of telling, off-hand, how many of the rest may have appeared in other of his books. But leaving this aside, the present volume is divided into two parts, and the first part has a very deliberate structure. It begins with a sonnet to Milton, followed by several poems about the Creation and the Fall, then a group based on ancient Greek myths, a few on the Old Testament figures, a number concerning the Christian story, and coming to a close with some religious poems of a contemporary feeling. The style is simple, direct and quiet, and occasionally very moving. Though a religious poet, Muir maintains in the teeth of fashionable orthodoxy a sort of natural religion, which leads him to say that as opposed to Calvin's doctrines "There's better gospel in man's natural tongue." This is quite a novel notion in our day. In addition to the title-poem, I especially liked "The Charm," "The Grave of Prometheus," "Day and Night," "The Cloud," "Double Absence," "The Difficult Land," the fine ending of "The Incarnate One," "The Horses," the first "Song," "The Late Wasp," and

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"The Animals." Muir has a certain tendency to allegory which is not to my taste, but he often manages it (as in the case of "Adam's Dream") by insisting on no clear correspondences, and leaving the reader with a dream-like feeling, even when the poem is not itself about a dream.

I regard with instinctive suspicion any man who, describing his own poetic practice, concludes by quoting Sidney Bechet on the nature of jazz; and this is meant with no disrespect to Bechet, who is a fine musician. It is something in the tone of the choice, as if the poet were eager for us to know that there is nothing precious and ivory-towered about *him*. And throughout John Ciardi's *As If*, his fifth book of poems, containing new material together with selections from previous volumes, he is busy insinuating what an all-around guy he is. This appears in a strange, over-blown, empty rhetoric (signifying passion) mixed with occasional tough words and phrases. Ciardi has translated *The Inferno*, no easy job, and though I have not seen it, it has been highly praised in some reputable quarters. But he does not seem to have learned one of the great lessons Dante taught many of the best modern poets: to find a language that seems to move on a single level of reality (though it really does more), that is capable of accurate description and report, and that does no violence to its own tone under the pressure of drama and passion. That is hard to do, harder today than when Dante did it, and probably it is impossible for any living poet to write a work as long, powerful and various without failing in this very respect. Therefore our poems are shorter; yet within their compass many of them have been impressively successful. But if there is a ghost of a voice speaking through Ciardi, it has not an Italian but a Welsh ring to it.

> *From the womb that stirred in dreams and soft*
> *from the dream dark coiled awake the son*
> *of the man-touched, man-giving, and oh unholdable*
> *sweet and milk of the flesh*
> *to dissolution and the swaying*
> *censer like a pendulum under the timing sky;*
> *the woman who was gifted*
> *gives back her barren son.*

or

> *. . . . Spraying my birdy daughter,*
> *my guppy-bubbling son, and nodding like bones*
> *on the leash of love, I heard the wind go over*
> *like jet-scream, the fact gone before the sound*
> *ripped at the world. And naked as a lover*
> *I watched a pointed moon sprout from the ground.*

"Time" and "the world" keep cropping up regularly in his poems

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(". . . I sprayed at the zodiac/ Falling how-many-colored to the sea-dark/ Of the world's body under, . . ." ". . . recovers/ The first sweet moon of time tonight." "So I know death is a dirty river/ At the edge of history, . . ." "Crushes the quail's egg with the sound of time." "the gulls are kissing time in its own flowing . . .") and they seem fairly enormous entities to accommodate convincingly, especially when they often receive only the consideration of a line. It is a problem of language, and I feel that the violence and excitement of Ciardi's language are not related to the given situations in his poems, but are intended to convince us, and perhaps the poet himself, that he feels strongly.

I am happy to register my great pleasure in discovering the poems of Katherine Hoskins. I feel almost as if I had discovered her myself, and yet she has appeared in several literary journals, and was able to be discovered by a publisher, before I had ever heard of her. Her first volume is excellent, and in so many ways that I have been puzzling how best to represent her work in this review. No partial quotation will do her justice, and most poems are too long to quote in full, but no reader would have an adequate sense of all Mrs. Hoskins can do without having read, "What World Well Lost?" "An Evening of Death," "M's Story," "Far South," "For Moses," "At Night All Cats Are Gray," "Ballet," "A Sight," "Temple," "After the Late Lynching," "A Value of Music," "The Sisters," "To Chuse Is To Do," "Excursion," "Or This, Perrault—," and several others. And this is cause sufficient to rejoice, and to start gathering in the laurel. If there are faults, they are an occasional inclination to cuteness, and the fact that from time to time she allows herself an easy sentiment. But these are piddling things in a book this good. Indeed, I feel I haven't been nearly emphatic enough in my praise, and therefore I set it down as an injunction for anyone who reads poetry to get this book and see for himself how original, crisp, penetrating, and compassionate Mrs. Hoskins can be. After much soul-searching in behalf of "At Night All Cats Are Gray," a beautiful poem about a white child's initiation into the knowledge of death by a Negro who kills some rats, I choose to print "After the Late Lynching" in its entirety, but not without insisting again that her variety in theme and attitude cannot be judged by one or two instances.

No,
It goes not liquidly for any of us.
Yseult
's as hard as Troilus.
Heloïse is far away and
Difficult.
Nor's Death felicitous.
Not princes' proud defiant trumpets,
Not good men's easyness
With Death is not ours yet

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Whose lives construe so little of what is brave.
Grace notes
Should not be asked of slaves.
Slaves' is, lunk-dumb and mutinous,
At whipping posts
To crouch and whine till they've
Spelled out the primitive construction—
So plain, so difficult—
Of a death and a woman.

Nor not from whitest light of foreign poems
Hope help;
But from her native woe
Who took that black head in her hands
And felt,
'A sack of little bones;'
Whose arms for the last time round him knew,
'All down one side no ribs
'But broken things that moved.'

Prefabrications is Josephine Miles' fourth book of poems, and her characteristic performance, as most readers already know, is short, terse, epigrammatic. But even within so strict a mode, she accomplishes a good deal of variety; though not, it must be added, without variety in her degree of success. "Education," for example, is so understated as to be almost unresolved. But at the other extreme, I think a poem like "Height" has about it the quality of some of the best of Emily Dickinson. Ordinarily her language is personal, abstract, wry, and witty, and her observations subtle moral ones. But I am still speaking here of her most familiar mode. What surprises in this book of sixty poems is the number of departures she takes from the quiet and ironic to the more overt and explicit feelings. It has not been without a risk, which is sometimes legible in the poems, some of them being plainly sentimental, and one, the sixth part of "Two Kinds of Trouble," a facile satire in which she declares herself afraid that America will have "Not any ugly passionate powerful visage/ Of man or stone to carve in anger/ And to make our ruin,/ But all air-conditioned." I am impolite enough to bring this up because the opening sections of the poem in which it appears are good and important and more adventurous and ambitious than many of Miss Miles' more tightly worked pieces. There are also several admirably funny poems (for example, "Belief") and I would like to bring to every reader's particular attention "Idea of Joy," "Eyesight," "Heldenleben," "Barometer," "Find," and "The Day The Winds."

When I come into my authority as Minister of Culture and Light, I will have all the high-schools in the nation destroy their hand-tooled copies of "Evangeline" and substitute in its place the second of Reed

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Whittemore's "Abbreviated Interviews with a Few Disgruntled Literary Celebrities." His Evangeline is a lot nearer to the Modern American Heroine than Longfellow's, and altogether more convincing. The poem appears in Whittemore's second volume, *An American Takes a Walk*, which includes fifteen poems from his first book, as well as forty-three new pieces, and the whole thing is a handsome exhibit of wit, high spirits, and wonderfully modulated tones of voice. Not merely the incidental pleasures, which are numerous, as for example,

> *Spring with his shoures sote,*
> *Shoures of snowe stille in Minnesota . . .*

inviting, aptly, a Swedish pronunciation of the Indian name to rhyme with the Chaucer, but the general air of recklessness, of happy extravagance, and the brilliantly adopted tones of mock-helplessness (as in "Ladders") or mock-servility (as in "An Address to the Holder of Some High Government Office") or mock-despair (as in "Variations on Being Thirty") are not only refreshing in themselves, but are not to be found in the work of any other poet I know about. At his worst he is trivial, but he has many successes, and often what seems like irresponsible glee will have its serious and unstated purpose.

I suppose there is no end to the ways that poets may enlist our feelings; and I am thinking now only of the ways we consider legitimate in a poem, and distinct from propagandistic effects, if that can ever be distinct. The problem presents itself in a first book of twenty-one poems by Thomas Cole, entitled *A World of Saints*, and most explicitly in the poem that ends the book, called "Light in August, 1945," which is about the atom bomb. The subject invites failure, and at least in part because our ideas and attitudes about the bomb are feverish and disunited. In fact, I suppose all we agree on is the bomb's terrible intensity, which would be hard for a poem to duplicate, and this one ends, "Everywhere bright, but bitter as a toad's stool." Yet if the poem fails, I think it is not because it doesn't work up to any high-pitched statement or violent consummation. It is rather because the poet has tried to move our feelings by the "truth" of what he says, and this applies to many of the poems in the book, including the personal ones, the love poems. Most of the poems contain their own "explanation" and the explanations are all sensible ones to which we can easily assent. But if the voice is casual, soft-spoken, even about highly-charged subjects, the strategy is not one of understatement but of explanation. And this defeats the opening promise of a poem like "Saint Francis in Ecstasy." The best poems in the book, all of them comparatively free of these difficulties, are "The Sudden Bridegroom," "Ways of Remembering," "The Stone Angel," and "La Grande Jatte: Sunday Afternoon,"—though in this last, and it may be finicky of me, I do not see by what license he permits himself to speak of "darling Degas' objection," as if he were Tallulah Bankhead.

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When the first poem of a book begins,

> *Not for us, so late, so gone astray, so loud,*
> *With glossed, insensitive, assurance to conscribe,*
> *Compel and handle, to presume to master, language;*

I am tempted to ask, Then what are you doing writing poems? But what follows of the title-poem of Katherine Watson's first book, *The Source and Other Poems,* offers no answer. Yet it's something that bothers her, and it's the central problem of her book. Miss Watson is a Catholic poet, and her work is frankly and openly imitative of Hopkins, though she is not yet capable of his rhythmic variety. Moreover, Hopkins is a difficult model, being as eccentric as he is, and tends to cramp and force a style, willy-nilly. Though Miss Watson's declared allegiance is for the multiplicity of delicious textures of the world, the truth is that she is more concerned with the abstract unity behind them; and her real problems are with the mind, which she affects to disdain in a most unCatholic way, and with the Holy Object of her faith, which she finds ineffable. As she says, "No, never, never, words shall be enough," and "Where'er I look my eyes let in to thought/ Loveliness waking words inadequate/ To speak Thy praise." And then she goes on to wish she were a bird or a blackthorn tree, the better to praise God. One should like to quote to her, even in the King James Version, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour."

The problem here can be stated as follows: in this kind of religious poetry, the material items of the world, be they never so beautiful, are honored not in their contingent particularity, but in their essences and as symbols for an abstract perfection or a moral order; they become metaphors, and I am impelled to say merely metaphors. We lose faith in their reality when the writer keeps using them too casually and transparently as emblems of the greater and more embracing Reality she is interested in. It leads Miss Watson to lists, as when she describes a certain spiritual state as being like the waters of a canal lock, and then like a pair of pendulums, and then like a pear, and like the balanced stresses of a house of cards, etc. I agree, the problem is not hers alone; it is Hopkins' as well, and Herbert's, and others'. We can only say that a poem of this kind succeeds when we feel that the correspondences don't diminish each other, but on the contrary, recover their full plenitude.

Miss Watson's verse is often syntactically contorted and comma-studded in a halting, breathless way that makes it seem that what she is saying is something dreadfully complex and difficult. But the fact is that her sentiments are simple, easy, and sometimes rather sentimental, and I suspect that the surface congestion is a way of trying to obscure

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this. And she is sometimes unforgivably careless, as when, in "Nightfall—Hillbrow," she says in the first stanza that the window blinds are drawn against "the inconvenient stars,/ The innocent snow," in the second stanza it is raining, and in the third stanza, roses and various other plants "press at the door." Clearly God alone here knows what weather or time of year it is; the poet doesn't.

In Winthrop Palmer's *Fables and Ceremonies*, a pleasant romanticism is occasionally touched with savage bitterness. The poems are all fairly short, and are commonly aphoristic. And to suit her purposes, Mrs. Palmer sometimes divides the world rather too easily into opposing camps of the natural and feeling and thoughtless on the one hand, and the utilitarian and artificial and careful on the other. This allows her to choose as the targets of her wrath some pretty plain sitting ducks, as in "Pygmalion," "Big Man on Campus," and "Every Hour on the Hour." But when, as often happens in this book, she forgets this doctrinal view of things, or, more properly, when her poems concede that the world is really more complicated, she is capable of genuine tenderness and mystery. And this is not to say that her witty and ironic poems are less successful than the others; rather that they can, under the pressure of realization, lose the edge of indignation. I like best of her poems "Hawaiian Legend," "To My Mother," "Bahia," "Resurrection," "Seminole Mysteries," the second and third "Ceremonies," "Ireland," "Props," and "Los Angeles." These, I think, more than the rest, avoid the dangers of aphorism, which either is amusedly dispassionate and objective, and thereby invites a placidity inimical to poetry; or, as is sometimes the case here, allows over-determined feelings to press the words beyond the limit of their meanings, with a bewildering effect.

Richard Wilbur's third volume, *Things of This World*, comes to us emblazoned with testimonials, like a patent medicine, and there seems generally to be little division of opinion about the genuine merit of his work; so I shall speak here instead about his central preoccupations. His recurrent subject is the search for reality which, though it is discovered in the most casual epiphanies, is characteristically fugitive and uncertain. In the title-poem, "Love Calls Us to the Things of This World," for example, the waking speaker sees angels before him just outside the window, and then recognizing them for fresh laundry, is happy and contented to "bring them down" for their daily and worldly purposes to which they and he are committed. But in "Mind" the other side of the problem is presented.

> *Mind in its purest play is like some bat*
> *That beats about in caverns all alone,*
> *Contriving by a kind of senseless wit*
> *Not to conclude against a wall of stone.*

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It has no need to falter or explore;
Darkly it knows what obstacles are there,
And so may weave and flitter, dip and soar
In perfect courses through the blackest air.

And has this simile a like perfection?
The mind is like a bat. Precisely. Save
That in the very happiest intellection
A graceful error may correct the cave.

Here "reality" alters, the "hard facts" cannot be so easily accounted for; so that Dr. Johnson, kicking away at his stone in *Ceremony*, Wilbur's second book, was really not proving anything. And again, in "A Chronic Condition," the world, disappearing in mist, is in danger of disappearing altogether. The epiphanies, fragile and inconclusive as far as philosophy is concerned, but touching in their inconclusiveness and thoroughly real as far as poetry is concerned, occur again and again, as in "Altitudes," "An Event," "Marginalia," "A Voice from under the Table" (where it does not actually occur, but is bravely sought), and in "A Plain Song for Comadre," where it does not come to the pious woman in the poem who has been waiting for it so long and patiently, but to the poet who watches her, and sees it in her dirty scrubwater. In truth, every poem in the book bears on this central subject, and it is Wilbur's virtue as a poet that, while he is able to take different positions in different poems, within any given poem he has a clear sense of the level of reality he is dealing with. Enough has been said about his suavity of language and technical skill for me to dispense with comment of this kind, and I prefer to make no selection of favorites from among his poems but to recommend the whole book as being exemplary and professionally accomplished.

If Wilbur is a formal poet, if sometimes his very theme is the formal aspects of reality, he never lets form take charge and become the ruling passion of the poem. This is what has happened, unfortunately, in the case of *Delta Return* by Charles Bell. This book, his second, is really one long poem, but it is divided into three equal sections, each one containing five parts, and each part containing five poems. Moreover, each of the poems is made up of five stanzas of five lines. This means that the book is in fact made up of seventy-five poems, all of the same length and structure. Even Dante, who was rather hide-bound in some respects, allowed himself to vary the length of the Cantos according as he had more or less to say. And as some of these poems are potentially richer than others, I strongly feel the Procrustean constraint, painful both where a good subject is minimized and where a thankless one is padded out to fill the formal requirements. But Mr. Bell has set himself another and even more difficult problem. The book is an Odyssey, recounting his return from Chicago to his native Mississippi; and on

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the face of it, as we might expect, there is little excitement. That is provided by flashbacks, reminiscences. What this means is that the poem moves between a present tense of action which is mechanically necessary to get us down south and is understandably thin in dramatic interest (requiring such lines as "I sleep a little as we drive along,/ South with the levee, toward the Delta home; . . ." and "From the fields and far woods moving as we move/ We come to a little town with its cotton gin,/ Beulah or Boyle, the pattern is the same, . . .") and on the other hand a past tense of remembered or reflective action. And this in turn means that the reader is bound to become bored by the ostensible present tense narrative, knowing that the protagonist is not coming back disguised, to slay the suitors and reclaim his wife and lands. And that while the author no doubt took this trip in actual fact, it becomes merely the framework for his recollections and meditations, which is to say, a formal structure; and seems therefore a transparent fiction devised to give him a chance to write some poetry when a good subject comes along. In the very nature of all this it follows that when a good subject does come along, the poet reacts to it self-consciously and with not a little pretentiousness. Mr. Bell is a terribly well-educated man, and his book is rich in epigraphs from the works of (among others) Leonardo, Hölderlin, Blake, Milton, Wordsworth, Thoreau, Marlowe, Plato, Pascal, Empedocles, St. Augustine, Goethe, and Whitman.

Poems: North & South—A Cold Spring by Elizabeth Bishop has won her the Pulitzer Prize, and her work has been highly praised in all quarters and generously anthologized, so I cannot hope to be able to introduce it here to an audience that has never heard of her. Nor do I wish to dissent from the general opinion of her worth: this is an excellent book. Miss Bishop has had the good fortune to be a good poet, and to be recognized as one. She now stands, I think, in the ranks of the very best who are writing in English today. Her work is distinctively her own, and her voice clear and personal.

I hope I shall not seem to be captious, then, if I go on to remark that, with certain splendid exceptions (most notably "Faustina, or Rock Roses") I feel that the poems in *A Cold Spring* are not quite up to the level of her earlier work; though it is a little hard to say why. Perhaps it is that she seems to have adopted more and more in the later poems an attitude that is distant and appreciative and uncommitted; and that the more personal ones are somehow unfulfilled or else bravely coy. I dare say this is not much help, and not even very accurate; and it is certainly not meant to reflect on her indisputable successes, which are too many to list, and too well known to need listing.

One ought to close a review as long as this on a note of assurance and comfort about the State of Modern Poetry. And I am able to strike such a note. The State of Modern Poetry is pretty much what it has

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been, and there's some new evidence to that effect. When Dr. W. C. Williams publishes a book, it is reviewed and applauded in all the literary magazines—but it is not *news*. What *is* news is that Tennessee Williams has published his first volume of poems, and *Time* has given him its cautious approval together with a portrait photograph in the book section. The fly-leaf of Mr. Williams' book says: "Included are all the poems Mr. Williams has written up to now which he wishes to preserve," and I have sometimes allowed myself to indulge in unbridled fantasy, trying to imagine the ones he eliminated.

HUGH KENNER

Under the Larches of Paradise[1]

THE GREAT WORK draws toward its close, with undiminished élan:

that the body of light come forth
from the body of fire
And that your eyes come to the surface
from the deep wherein they were sunken,
Reina—for 300 years,
and now sunken
That your eyes come forth from their caves
& light then
as the holly leaf . . .

There can be no doubt that the author of *Rock-Drill* is at the height of his powers; in those majestic, assured rhythms inheres a new elation proper to the region the poem has now entered. The old themes are recapitulated with new power; the aphorisms vibrate on the target—

Awareness restful & fake is fatiguing.
* * *
study with the mind of a grandson
and watch the time like a hawk
* * *
The pusillanimous
wanting all men cut down to worm-size.

Beginning with Canto 90, some forty pages of unfaltering lyric brilliance initiate us into the realm of "the values that endure like the sea," a hundred startling motifs arrayed like fireflies around a theological armature.

1 SECTION: ROCK-DRILL, 85-95 DE LOS CANTARES, by *Ezra Pound*. New Directions. $3.00.

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Their coherence is easily indicated from the passage first quoted. The reader of the *Cantos* has encountered Aphrodite's eyes many times—

Your eyen two wol sleye me sodenly (Canto 81)

—and been told of their immersion in the accidental postures of matter—

all that Sandro knew, and Jacopo
and that Velásquez never suspected
lost in the brown meat of Rembrandt
and the raw meat of Rubens and Jordaens . . . (Canto 80)

The beauty inheres in the "meat," but the meat occludes our sight:

"This alone, leather and bones between you and τὸ πᾶν"

When the body of light comes forth from the body of fire, the permanent disengages itself with finality from the casual: not, since it remains a *body* of light, by some academic extraction of essences, but by a process akin to revelation, prepared by Love.

Love, gone as lightning,
enduring 5000 years.

The new Cantos abound in such phrases, holding in tension the transient and the inextinguishable, and always having something to do with Light. That the light-philosophers, Erigena, Avicenna, Richard St. Victor, inhabit Pound's pantheon we have known since the Pisan sequence; but there the ideograph for "the sun's cord unspotted" did duty as synecdoche for a process of irradiation now brilliantly displayed. So we are told how

The waves rise, and the waves fall
But you are like the moon-light:
Always there!

Light endures, and the sea endures; but the visible part of the sea is a turmoil. Elsewhere the enduring substantial luminousness, the crystal sphere, enters this context—

& from fire to crystal
via the body of light . . .

Or again,

Crystal waves weaving together toward the gt/ healing
Light compenetrans *of the spirits*
The Princess Ra-Set has climbed
to the great knees of stone,
She enters protection,
the great cloud is about her,

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She has entered the protection of crystal
convien che si mova
la mente, amando

The crystal links itself with a recurring phrase,

The light there almost solid,

and late in the last Canto of the sequence the whole complex is joined with a now permanent sea:

That the crystal wave mount to flood-surge . . .
The light there almost solid.

This is a permanence that contains and requires all orderly movement, not an arrest nor, we are explicitly told, a stasis; and in the Poundian paradiso all movement is both orderly and free.

The precision of natural renewal has replaced the cut stone of the early Cantos:

The clover enduring,
basalt crumbled with time.
"Are they the same leaves?"
that was an intelligent question.

For one of the purposes of the poem, they are the same leaves; since the form persists, a mode of intelligence informing, as Agassiz would have said, the vegetable order. The visible is a signature of the invisible, notarized by, for instance, a 17th century neo-platonist, "Secretary of Nature, J. Heydon."

"We have", said Mencius, "but phenomena."
monumenta. In nature are signatures
needing no verbal tradition,
oak leak never plane leaf. John Heydon.

Such motifs reach far back into the *Cantos*, the large-scale structure of which becomes more clear and massive as we get more and more of it. From the very beginning of his career, Pound's work has been polarized by two implicit themes: the hero in rebellious exile, and the emergence of order from chaos: respectively, the story of Odysseus, and the story of Aphrodite born from the sea. The Odysseus figure specifies and generalizes all Pound's wandering or proscribed or forgotten or embattled heroes: the troubadours, Dante and Ovid the exiled poets, Fenollosa and Dolmetsch ignored by specialists, Frobenius with limitless curiosity travelling through Africa, Agassiz dumped by the evolutionists, Douglas and Gesell, Sigismundo, Mussolini: every one the object at some time of a campaign of vilification, or a conspiracy of silence. Aphrodite we glimpse whenever the work breaks through into lyric, or forms half congeal in the waves, or eyes pierce the mist, or some flux of events locks into an intelligible pattern. Because she

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comes from the sea, Pound welcomes into his epic the look of chaos, for the sake of its potentialities of order; "points define a periphery"; the entire work is a seeming flux amid which Odysseus voyages and out of which, at the very least, a tone, a shape, a personality emerges. Out of the endless interaction of these two myths comes the scenario of the *Cantos*. Canto 1 gives us Odysseus visiting the dead; Canto 2, Aphrodite's sea, with forms in it, and a metamorphosis that uses the mutability of matter to suggest the permanence of the intelligible species. The Pisan Cantos commence with a formal reprise: paralleling Canto 1, Canto 74 abounds in references to a beached Odysseus, while paralleling Canto 2, Canto 75 presents via Jannequin's bird-music a sequence of metamorphoses in which the form of a natural beauty—like the signature of the oak-leaves—persists indestructible.

The Rock-Drill sequence in turn opens with a reprise of the structure of the China-Adams sequence, Cantos 52-71. In the first Rock-Drill Canto, 85, we are given the parallel with 52-61, the moral essentials of Chinese history, blended, through Cantos 86 and 87, into contemporary analogies and contrasts. In the second Rock-Drill section, Cantos 88 and 89, we have the American application, the struggle of Jackson and Senator Benton against the usurious Bank of the United States: a structural parallel with 62-71 (Adams as Chinese Emperor), and a thematic explication of 37 (the Bank War). Near the end of *Rock-Drill* Odysseus and the girl from the waves reappear, transfigured. Odysseus, transposed to a plane of sensibility where cunning and heroics are irrelevant, moves through the latter part of Canto 94 as Apollonius of Tyana, who slaughtered no beast, wandered through India, Egypt and Asia Minor teaching and learning, held parley with the shade of Achilles without having to visit Hades and feed it blood, and (like Pound) was laid under indictment in the capital of the world. As for the figure out of the flux, she is this time the sea-nymph Leucothea, who rescued Odysseus when his raft was overwhelmed (*Odyssey* V, 333) and with her magical veil ("my bikini is worth yr/ raft") enabled him to reach Phaeacia. She has a greater sense of utility than one can read in the eyes of Botticelli's Aphrodite; she is also, we are reminded several times, *Kadmou thugater*, daughter of Cadmus who invented the alphabet, and bears analogy to the poetry of the *Cantos*, no vendable objet d'art but a force serviceable to storm-tossed author and reader alike.

The *Cantos* generally rise into independence of their sources, but page references at three points in *Rock-Drill* direct our attention explicitly to three books laid under systematic contribution: Couvreur's *Chou King*, from which the ideograms come; Benton's *Thirty Years' View*, for the account of American government; and Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius*, the record of the least fanatical and most percipient of sages. The first is moral, the second historical and practical, the third spiritual.[2]

[2] The *Thirty Years' View* hasn't been reprinted for nearly a century, though the Benton volume in the Square Dollar Series contains much of the relevant material.

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After salvaging a few introductory phrases, Pound generally starts his systematic dealings with a source-book about a third of the way in. The references to the *Chou King* or History Classic begin in the fourth chapter of Part III with the teachings of the minister Y Yin, and utilize all the rest of the book in order. Pound echoes all of Couvreur's apparatus: Chinese text, transliterations, French version, Latin version, footnotes identifying and dating Emperors, so borrowing from this plenitude of scholarly reverberation a sense of copiousness to furnish the brief space allotted in the poem. "Birds and terrapin lived under Hia," is the first item in his systematic summary:

beast and fish held their order
Neither flood nor flame falling in excess

We are on page 114 of Couvreur; immediately a column of Chinese sounds, "i moua pou gning," lures us to the source-book, where we find "and no one not contented." The Bill of Rights passage refers us to page 131 of Couvreur: "If one person lacks freedom to do good, the ruler will have one auxiliary the less, and his work will be incomplete." Throughout Canto 85 the reduplicated ideograms reiterate an active *senso morale*; the handsome "ling" with which the volume opens—

Our dynasty came in because of a great sensibility

—is defined in Mathews' dictionary (No. 4071) as "the spirit of being which acts upon others," with the sub-entry "intelligent," but in Couvreur's glossary as "Intelligent; bon; âme d'un défunt"; while in the *Chou King* text it is repeatedly used to denote the Emperor's "feel of the people." Pound's word, "sensibility," gradually irradiates its context with all these meanings.[3] The "hsien form" at the bottom of the first page (Mathews 2671) has a heart in the upper right corner and moving legs beneath: virtue is active. The "luminous eye" on page 89 also has legs; and the presence of legs explains why *chen* (a designation of virtue, page 61) is "beyond ataraxia," the Greek word for freedom from passion.

Tê on pages 6 and 8 (Mathews 6162) has the prefix denoting action (man in two positions) and the "heart" component at its base. Mathews defines it as "practice of truth and acquisition thereof in the heart." The chronicle of its involvement with the themes of the *Cantos* is characteristic of Pound's intentions. On pages 5-6 we read,

Perspicax qui excolit se ipsum,
Their writings wither because they have no curiosity,

The Chinese references are to the History Classic, *Chou King*, edited by S. Couvreur, S.J., printed in China; my page references are to the 4th edition, 1934. The Coneybeare translation of Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* is in the Loeb series.

[3] His mode of generalizing and compressing may be gauged from the fact that the opening line of the Canto is based on a verse which Couvreur (p. 285) renders thus: "Les empereurs de notre maison de Tcheou (Wenn Wang et Ou wang), à cause de leur grande bonté, furent chargés d'exécuter l'oeuvre du roi du ciel." "Our dynasty came in because of a great sensibility."

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This "leader", gouged pumpkin
that they hoist on a pole,
But if you will follow this process

. . . here the *tê* sign occurs, its form suggesting a forward motion of which the pumpkin-procession is a ghastly parody. On page 8, the ideogram recurs in connection with the function of the genuine leader:

Not serendipity
but to spread
tê *thru the people.*

These two passages distill the context of the salient occurrence of *tê* in the *Chou King* (p. 123), where Couvreur has, "Qui excolit se ipsum et vera virtute concordat sum subditis, est perspicax rex," alternatively, "Un prince intelligent se perfectionne lui-même, et pratique la virtue sincèrement avec ses sujets." But Pound isn't quite through with the ideogram; much later he recalls it in a context of natural history (p. 34)

As the water-bug casts a flower on stone
nel botro
One interaction. Tê interaction. A shadow?

—the interaction between heaven, prince and people paralleled by that between the descent of light, the refractive processes of dented water, and the substantiality of the water-bug, which results in a radiant unforeseeable entity, the spectral flower on the stone. This metaphysical image effects a blending of the moral ambience of the *tê* ideogram with the motifs of the Paradiso proper in the latter half of the book.

Such a process of moral circulation, starting with the ruler's "sensibility" and effecting the dissemination of "*tê* thru the people," is once more tied tightly to the Paradiso sequence on the first page of Canto 90:

Templum aedificans, not yet marble,
"Amphion!"
And from the San Ku
to the room in Poitiers where one can stand
casting no shadow,
That is Sagetrieb,
that is tradition.
Builders had kept the proportion,
did Jacques de Molay
know these proportions?
and was Erigena ours? . . .

The San Ku (the ideograms mean "Three Alone") was a council of three established by Tch'eng Wang in the Tcheou dynasty, inferior but not subordinate to the grand preceptor, grand master and grand guardian. (The quasi-masonic terminology suggests one link with

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Jacques de Molay.) Their function was to "étendre partout la réforme, s'appliquant avec respect à faire briller l'action du ciel et de la terre" (Couvreur, p. 333). "Faire briller" reaches forward to Erigena with his "omnia quae sunt lumina sunt," and out to the irradiated room in Poitiers, or the temple, not marble, which Amphion is to build with music. Nor is this a nest of bright associations, but the profile of a forward drive in time: Sagetrieb, etymologically word-drive, the urge to say something, denominates a tradition backed by energy, thrust forward and sustaining the builders who "kept the proportion."

Benton maintained this tradition; his speeches in the Senate, as recorded in his *Thirty Years' View*, are steadily urgent and steadily enlightening, with neither quality sacrificed to the other. His great speech of February 1831 against the renewal of the Bank's charter loses none of its momentum or precision in Pound's summary on pages 46-47; its ordonnance is attested to by the fact that Pound is mainly using the head-phrases of Benton's paragraphs:

> *. . . Such*
> *a bank tends to subjugate government*
> *It tends to collusions,*
> *to borrow 50 and pay back one hundred,*
> *It tends to create public DEBT.*
> *1694: Loan One Million 200,000*
> *Interest 80,000, Expenses 4.*
> *GERM, nucleus, and is now 900 MILLION.*
> *It tends to beget and prolong useless wars;*
> *aggravate inequalities; make and break fortunes. . . .*

There was a time when the Senate could expect and would listen to serious arguments whose eloquence survives a century and has the utmost contemporary relevance. Benton provides Pound with a powerful summary of the Jackson-Van Buren Cantos, as well as with a measuring-rod for the contemporary president who would listen to nothing:

> *"Don't write me any more things to tell him*
> *(scripsit Woodward, W.E.)*
> *"on these occasions*
> *HE*
> *talks." (End quote)*

This great block of material shores up the lyric Paradiso which commences with Canto 90 and in turn sustains the narrative of Apollonius of Tyana (Canto 94).

The Apollonius sequence rhymes with the voyage of Odysseus to the underworld in Canto 1 and the Carthaginian voyage down the west coast of Africa in Canto 40; except that, whereas Odysseus did magical rites to compel the shades, and the Carthaginians went as tourists after marvels, "seeking an exit" from a commercial civiliza-

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tion from which they didn't really dissociate themselves (their heroism was a buccaneer's virtue, and they brought back the skins of three "folk hairy and savage/ whom our Lixtae said were Gorillas"), Apollonius journeyed into India and Egypt to parley peaceably with sages. He taught, and was taught, "that the universe is alive," and Pound records the Greek of his fine leave-taking of the Indian host who conducted him back out of the interior: "You have presented me with the sea; farewell." On the next page comes the explicit parallel with Canto 1, "And then went down to the ship":

ἐπὶ τὴν ναῦν ἐσπέρας ἤδη
embarking at sunset.
That he passed the night on the mound of Achilles
"master of tempest and fire"
& he set up Palamedes[4]
an image that I, Philostratus, saw
and a shrine that will hold ten people drinking.

We then hear in Apollonius' own words how the great shade appeared to him, and faded away:

"It was not by ditch-digging and sheep's-guts . . .
"in Aeolis close to Methymna"
in the summer lightning, close upon cock-crow.

Whereupon, to unite this interview with his Paradiso rather than with Odysseus' Underworld, Pound interpolates:

So that walking under the larches of Paradise
the stream was exceedingly clear
& almost level its margin

Though "Man is under Fortuna," Apollonius moves exempt from calamity:

for the doers of holiness
γῆν μεν πάσαν ἀσφαλή[5]
they may ship or swim, being secure.

He is the personification of the moral precept on the second page of the book:

Not led of lusting, not of contriving
but is as the grass and tree
eccellenza
not led of lusting,
not of the worm, contriving

[4] This memorial to a forgotten hero of the Trojan war parallels Odysseus' stele to Elpenor, "man of no fortune and with a name to come."
[5] "The whole earth affords secure ground."

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He also was interviewed by Vespasian, and spoke of the rightness of the latter's intention to seize absolute power, in the circumstances that then obtained (this is the V:35 which Pound notes is worth attention); but, being no doctrinaire monarchist, indeed, "not particular about theoretical organizations," he later sent Vespasian a letter of rebuke when the latter, enslaving the Hellenes, "did not show good sense in Greece."

Like the *Chou King* and the *Thirty Years' View*, the Philostratus *Life of Apollonius* is worth reading. Long proscribed by the Christians, it is one more of the neglected books to which the *Cantos* have drawn attention. Primary sources are always the richest. Pound has looked into the 1901 *Apollonius of Tyana* of his old acquaintance G. R. S. Mead, and used just two details, the accentuation of Týana and the romantic fact that the Empress Julia Domna who commissioned Philostratus' work was the "daughter of a sun priest in Babylon," but otherwise he has stuck to Philostratus' text, mainly books III-V, extracting nuggets like Apollonius' refutation of the Greek maxim that "one penny begets another," or the etymology of "Red Sea," or the tigers that worship the sun, or the people who "bell the boat to keep off the seals." In Canto 91 we find one anticipatory glimpse from Book VIII-3; when Apollonius went on trial before Domitian he was told he must enter the court with nothing on him, meaning no books or papers; and he replied with whimsical composure, "Is this a bath-house? Or a Court House?" Pound's reference to this incident is folded around a line from the *Odyssey* (V, 332) about the winds playing shuttlecock with the hero's raft, and accompanied by a reminder that the sea-nymph made Odysseus cast off the garments Calypso had given him: "get rid of paraphernalia."

"We think because we do not know"; all is paraphernalia that does not at length float easily in the mind; the mind at length having encompassed without strain what is necessary may dream of coming to "that High City."

"Ghosts dip in the crystal,
adorned"
That the tone change from elegy
"Et Jehanne"
(the Lorraine girl)
A lost kind of experience?
scarcely,
O Queen Cytherea,
che 'l terzo ciel movete.

I am grateful to Mr. Fred Siegel of New York City for generously placing at my disposal the results of his industriousness with the Chinese dictionary.

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DOUGLASS PARKER

Ovid Returned

OVID MADE HIS bed, and lies in it. He thus may serve as a rather horrifying object-lesson for today's troops of junketing poets, who display and dissect their wares nightly at universities or in drafty YWCAs. The lesson is plain: "Avoid public self-criticism; you may be believed." And never was any poet so effectively damned out of his own mouth as this one.

He had his reasons, of course—better ones, if integrity means anything at all, than income. The almost pathological stream of self-deprecation that emerged from his exile on the Black Sea was calculated solely to convince Augustus Caesar that here was no seditious poet, no threat to the new State, but merely a light and insubstantial versifier, possessed of fantastic technique, small thought, and the political consciousness of a two-year-old. But Rome's most civilized product ground out his existence in its most barbarous outpost, for Augustus knew better than to believe him, and so did Tiberius.

Posterity, however, didn't, and it is Ovid's tragedy that, with minor interruptions, he has been trapped for the last few centuries in an exile that is the more horrible for being self-imposed—an exile from the company of poets. Informed modern opinion has never been able to be swayed much from the comfortable preconceptions which he gave it: that Ovid is the Peck's Bad Boy of antiquity; that he may be considered an anthropological goldmine, a rhetorical treasure-house, or something to be mailed in plain wrapper—but never a poet.

Therefore, with the recent appearance of not one, not two, but three translations into English of Ovid's masterpiece,[1] it seemed legitimate to hope that the prevailing critical winds might be shifting, that the impetus behind at least one of these turnings just might have been the feeling that Ovid was a Poet, uppercase, who had something to say and said it. But the hope was frustrated. From Tomi, Ovid requested *veniam pro laude*, indulgence instead of praise, for this poem, and indulgence is just what he receives at the hands of Miss Innes, Mr. Watts, and Mr. Humphries. There is no thought whatsoever that the poem might have any real unity *qua* poem. Without exception, they put a feather in its hat and call it macaronic.

Miss Innes, granted, was hampered by the nature of her series, the Penguin Classics, which is one of the most rigidly anti-poetic forces in English letters today—a fact strengthened, incidentally, rather than

[1] THE METAMORPHOSES OF OVID. An English Version by *A. E. Watts* with the Etchings of *Pablo Picasso*. University of California Press. $5.00. OVID: METAMORPHOSES, translated by *Rolfe Humphries*. Indiana University Press. $3.95. THE METAMORPHOSES OF OVID, translated by *Mary M. Innes*. Penguin Books. $.85.

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weakened, by Miss Sayers' Dante. If one is dedicated to a narrowly utilitarian view of literature, and sees poetry only as a regrettable barrier between the man in the street and the net meaning of the text, one will naturally conclude, as Miss Innes does, that the *Metamorphoses*' only excuse for existence is as a "treasure-house of myth and legend," a collection of stories, in no particular order or inner relationship, whose chief burden is to improve and instruct readers in The Western Tradition. She does, it is true, genuflect perfunctorily towards Pythagorean metempsychosis as a possible overriding and unifying concept, she smiles at "freshness and charm," and she makes a *moue* at rhetoric, but this is all. In her hands, the poem becomes a succession of vignettes, written in perfectly acceptable, unexceptionable, flattened prose:

> There Minos imprisoned the monster, half-bull, half-man, and twice feasted him on Athenian blood; but when, after a further interval of nine years, a third band of victims was demanded, this brought about the creature's downfall. For, thanks to the help of the princess Ariadne, Theseus rewound the thread he had laid, retraced his steps, and found the elusive gateway as none of his predecessors had been able to do. . . .

Mr. Watts' production should stand for some decades as a literary curiosity, the unhappy child of two fundamental misconceptions. The first is his refusal to regard the poem as a poem, a thing which has a beginning, a middle, and an end; rather, he sees it as, "in substance, a store of legend and a panorama of the Graeco-Roman world," and, more important, "in respect of its form, a compendium of literary technique, the most complete exploration in verse of the resources of rhetoric that has ever been made." Stores, panoramas, and compendia have no particular structure; rhetoric, then, becomes the grand *raison d'être* of the piece, and its reproduction the goal of the translation. Here the second misconception comes into play.

It is a truism that English has no meter at once as rigorous and as common as the Latin hexameter. Few English poets have ever been in the position of Horace: *Mansuri oppidulo, quod versu dicere non est* (we were going to stay at a little town whose name won't go into the meter). Mindful of this, Mr. Watts decided upon the heroic couplet as the perfect vehicle; it was, he says, "an instinctive choice." It might have been better to give the matter some thought. For the chief characteristic of the Latin hexameter is not its rigor, but its fluidity, its ability to transcend precisely that end-stopped crampedness imposed by couplets, or elegiacs, or stanzas. Take, then, the couplet and the fascination with rhetorical minutiae, add the linguistic sloppiness covered by the term "the freedom of the language from Shakespeare to the present day," and witness:

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And of their union on the winding shore
Two lovely children at a birth she bore,
Caunus and Byblis.
Byblis proves it true
That girls should love where loving's not taboo.
With passion for her brother was she caught,
Not loving like a sister, as she ought.
Ere understanding of her feelings came,
To kiss and clasp her brother seemed no shame:
She misconstrued her passion, and it passed
For sisterly affection; but at last
Lapsing by slow degrees, she dressed with care
To meet him, overeager to seem fair;
On other women, who, when he was by,
Appeared more comely, cast a jealous eye. . . .

Now this, with all its inversions and anachronisms, is tolerably close to the Latin, and may thus have some use for expounding small points to fourth-form boys, who speak no language anyway; but as English verse, capable of standing by itself, it is unbearable, and unfair to Ovid, who is neither crabbed, nor quaint, nor boxed. The interlarding of some so-so etchings by Picasso gives the whole business a curious air of marzipan dampened with flat champagne.

Mr. Humphries' version appeared midway in this *annus mirabilis*, and thus falls between those of Miss Innes and Mr. Watts in more ways than one. Like the former, he would communicate with his audience; like the latter, he would convey some of Ovid's incredible mastery of language. And he succeeds in his task, avoiding the baldness of the one and the turgidity of the other, by employing a loose iambic pentameter, the same scheme he used in translating the *Aeneid*. His choice is happy, very happy; even though the loose meter may become formless on occasion, it never deviates into prose, but guides without forcing. This is not to say that the result is perfect, by any means, for there are a number of instances which betray the "quick and unscrupulous job" that is, by his own admission, Mr. Humphries' method. For example,

non pronuba Iuno,
non Hymenaeus adest, non illi Gratia lecto:
Eumenides tenuere faces de funere raptas,
Eumenides stravere torum, tectoque profanus
incubuit bubo thalamique in culmine sedit
(6.428-432)

is rendered by

The omens, though, were baleful: neither Juno,
Nor Hymen, nor the Graces, blessed the marriage;

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The Furies swung, or, maybe, brandished torches
Snatched from a funeral; the Furies lighted
The bridal bed; and above the bridal chamber
Brooded the evil hoot-owl

wherein the first line is (perhaps necessarily) padded; *stravere* "laid" is mistranslated by "lighted," and the Furies, who merely held (*tenuere*) the torches, are made to swing or brandish them in a very flat line which looks like the product of free association. Still, the total translation is always flexible and more than adequate, always responsive in tone to the original, and sometimes poetic to a high degree, as in the conclusion of the story of Ceyx and Alcyone:

She reached the body
Lifeless and still, tried to embrace the limbs
With her new wings, in vain, and tried to kiss
Cold lips with her rough bill. No one could say
Whether Ceyx felt those kisses and responded,
Or whether it was the lift of the waves alone
That made him raise his face. But he had felt them,
And through the pity of the gods, the husband
Became a bird, and joined his wife. Together
They suffered, and together loved; no parting
Followed them in their new-found form as birds.
They mate, have young, and in the winter season,
For seven days of calm, Alcyone
Broods over her nest on the surface of the waters
While the sea-waves are quiet. Through this time
Aeolus keeps his winds at home, and ocean
Is smooth for his descendants' sake.

We should be grateful for this. Minor inaccuracies or no, it is as near an English Ovid as we are likely to see for some time.

And yet, at least in the case of this reviewer, gratitude toward Mr. Humphries is tempered with the same sort of impotent fury which a good Stoic must have felt upon beholding a good Epicurean: he does all the right things for all the wrong reasons. Ovid is still the same old tralatician Ovid to him, the self-confessed *tenerorum lusor amorum*: "Ovid's great work, whatever the official and ostensible theme, is really one long love poem, or series of love poems. . . ." Though he somewhat reluctantly admits that it is "all of a piece," he means this in respect to meter; his defense of the poet, and thus of the poem, is that sort of annoying and invalid *petitio principii* that never goes beneath the surface:

> The critical judgment that labels Ovid a glib and superficial writer seems to me glib and superficial. Charm, it may be, is superficial; is grace? Is tenderness?

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These questions, unless one is talking about a hostess rather than a poet, are not nearly so rhetorical as Mr. Humphries thinks, and they might equally well be applied to the defense of Statius, or even Praed. To this is added a well-worn theory of what might be termed "perfunctorism," which pictures Ovid, or any poet writing in a tradition, as compelled from time to time to write things he doesn't wish to, and so doing them in an offhand fashion. We are left, then, with nuggets of grace, or tenderness, or gaiety, which deal somehow with love and are separated by bits, or perhaps tracts, of perfunctory gravel. In God's name, what sort of a poem is *that*?

To put it dogmatically, the *Metamorphoses* is one poem, not an omnium-gatherum of epyllia ingeniously stitched together because the author liked puzzles. Its greatness finally lies, not in the rhetoric, nor the grace, nor the brilliance of single episodes, but in the validity of the structure as a whole. Ovid combined the aims of Lucretius and Vergil—the explanation of the universe and the placing of Rome within that universe—but with a significant difference: he viewed from the point of the individual as individual, not as citizen, not as world-weary collocation of atoms. His talents were peculiarly adapted to this end: if not love's greatest celebrant, he was (and is) certainly its greatest descriptive pathologist, and there is no better way to plumb the variety and deepnesses of the individual soul than to apprehend and to comprehend it in love. His rhetoric, too, was not a substitute for passion, as the Victorians felt in preferring what they fondly imagined to be the white-hot yawps of Catullus. It was an instrument, or better, a method of proceeding by triangulation to isolate the peculiar essence of a particular soul in a particular love affair. For the succession of blighted lovers that fills the pages of the *Metamorphoses* never duplicates. As Mr. Humphries notes, Myrrha and Byblis are not the same, though they both rationalize their incestuousness; neither are Medea and Scylla, nor Io and Callisto.

These individuals, then, and through them the individual, are regarded in their interaction with the universe. It is an odd universe, neither Lucretian-materialist nor Vergilian-determinist, but one based, it would seem, on contradictories. It proceeds chronologically from the Creation to Augustus, but this sweep is deliberately vitiated by flash-backs, recollections, and cross-references to the point where the time sense breaks down, and all happenings seem roughly contemporaneous. Again, the poem has an obvious goal: all events, all changes in the Pythagorean flux culminate in the stability of Augustus' New Rome; but, when this is said, one is confronted with the fact that many of these phenomena are ultimately causeless, random, occurring at the unconsidered whim of the gods. And the gods themselves are the most contradictory of all. Jupiter is presented as both Ruler and Lecher, an irreconcilable order/disorder antinomy, and the rest of the Olympians follow suit. The result for the individual, in this temporal, ordered, and divinely ruled cosmos which knows no time, nor cause, nor law,

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is almost uniformly unhappy. He is punished—sometimes justly, mostly through no fault of his own. True, there are compensations; true, the happiness of Philemon and Baucis, in the eighth and central book, shines over the rest of the poem as a paradigm of what might be attained, were the gods' ways justifiable. But this is rarely, if ever, approached elsewhere.

Traditional criticism cites this divine dichotomy as merely another instance of Ovid's well-known poetic myopia, seeing nothing in the opposition of the skeptical Hellenistic view of Heaven and the reverent Augustan view but the fruits of an irresponsible eclecticism. Ovid, however, was perfectly well aware of what he was doing, and clearly gave his decision as to which was the true concept at the beginning of the sixth book, in the contest between the goddess Minerva and the mortal Arachne, a contest involving the weaving of pictured webs:

> *Minerva showed the hill of Mars in Athens*
> *And that old conflict over the name of the land.*
> *There sat the twelve great gods of the high Heaven,*
> *On lofty thrones in majesty, and Jove*
> *Presiding, royal, above the well-known faces. . . .*[2]

This austere view, which depicts the Olympians as gravely just and awesome, is countered by Arachne's, which shows the results of their awful and violent lust:

> *Arachne also*
> *Worked in the gods, and their deceitful business*
> *With mortal girls. There was Europa, cheated*
> *By the bull's guise. . . .*
> *There was Asterie, held by the eagle,*
> *And Leda, lying under the wings of the swan,*
> *Antiope, pregnant with twins, whose father*
> *Was a satyr, so she thought, but it was really*
> *Jove in disguise again; he took Alcmena*
> *In the semblance of Amphitryon; he came*
> *To Danae in a shower of gold; he was*
> *A flame to Aegina, to Mnemosyne*
> *A shepherd, a mottled snake to Deo's daughter. . . .*

The lines are clearly drawn in this juxtaposition, and Minerva, least passionate of the gods, is the advocate, not merely of excellence in weaving, nor even of reverence, but of the whole concept of a just and ordered universe. Her reaction and the outcome of the contest are Ovid's decision:

> *Neither Minerva, no, nor even Envy*
> *Could find a flaw in the work; the fair-haired goddess*
> *Was angry now, indeed, and tore the web*
> *That showed the crimes of the gods, and with her shuttle*

[2] Mr. Humphries' translation is used here and in the passages that follow.

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Struck at Arachne's head, and kept on striking
Until the daughter of Idmon could not bear it,
Noosed her own neck, and hung herself. . . .

In winning, then, Minerva loses, and the gods lose; her actions prove Arachne's picture, not her own, and Ovid has demonstrated, *a fortiori*, his choice: the myth of divine reason and justice is false.

Bound up with all this is Rome, the New Rome, the Great Orderer. This is not merely tacked-on propaganda: it is, in one very explicit sense, the universe itself. From the beginning, Augustus has been identified with Jupiter, and Heaven with the Palatine, and this identification is insisted upon at the conclusion:

Jupiter rules the lofty citadels of Heaven,
The kingdom of the triple world, but Earth
Acknowledges Augustus. Each is father
As each is lord.

This is normally put down to the rather crowded account of Ovidian hyperbole, but if even vestigial intelligence is presumed on the part of the poet, somewhat startling implications arise. The equivalence of a random, cruel, wanton universe with the Roman Empire is not particularly laudatory to the latter, but quite like the picture an authoritarian peace might present to a free-thinking poet who had never known war. And the identification of Augustus with a ruler-god whose prime characteristic in the poem is lechery is too close to be accidental, for though Augustus, after a remarkably checkered youth, set up as moral tutor for the Roman cit, he remained, if we credit Suetonius, *ad vitiandas virgines promptior*—"overfond of deflowering maidens." Augustus and his New Rome, implies Ovid, are as unjust and unjustifiable, as careless of the individual, as Jupiter and his universe.

But the human condition, though pressed and harried by irrational powers both temporal and divine, is not a hopeless one. Here Ovid had recourse to his much-maligned Pythagoreanism, a philosophy in his hands neither subtle nor profound, but perfectly adequate for his purpose. Says the philosopher:

Our souls
Are deathless; always, when they leave our bodies,
They find new dwelling-places. . . .
So do I teach that spirit
Is evermore the same, though passing always
To ever-changing bodies.

The essence of this metempsychosis is immortality. The individual *qua* individual thus outlasts the vicissitudes of at best an indifferent environment, and his soul is the unchanging thing in the cosmic flux. I do not mean to say that the *Metamorphoses* is a unity because it can be referred to Pythagoreanism, as to a metaphysical straitjacket which

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keeps its otherwise disject members from flopping about the landscape: dialectical respectability, of itself, never yet made a poem great, or even good, else Lucan, say, would be acclaimed a master. I mean, rather, that the statement of that philosophy in the fifteenth and last book of the poem crystallizes, fixes firmly the element common to all the varied transformations: the permanence, and thus the triumph, of the individual soul.

Ovid particularized even more. He was later to write from exile to a friend:

> *But better as a portrait of myself*
> *Are my songs, which I would have you read,*
> *Poor as they are—those songs which tell about*
> *The changing forms of men.*

It is not intended here to examine the precise degree to which the *Metamorphoses* is a self-portrait, but rather to note, in this connection, that Ovid, shortly after the blow of relegation to the Black Sea had fallen, gave the work this ending—which is not, as is generally supposed, an epilogue:

> *Now I have done my work. It will endure,*
> *I trust, beyond Jove's anger, fire, and sword,*
> *Beyond Time's hunger. The day will come, I know,*
> *So let it come, that day which has no power*
> *Save over my body, to end my span of life*
> *Whatever it may be. Still, part of me,*
> *The better part, immortal, will be borne*
> *Above the stars; my name will be remembered*
> *Wherever Roman power rules conquered lands,*
> *I shall be read, and through all centuries,*
> *If prophecies of bards are ever truthful,*
> *I shall be living, always.*

This is more than the customary *non omnis moriar*: it is the summation and consummation of the poem, the final specification of the individual in the concrete instance of the poet himself. "Jove's anger" is, of course, both the wantonness of circumstance and that wrath of Augustus which could, if not transform, translate a subversive poet to the rude Germanic tribes. But the critical words are *super astra*: the gods are among the stars, Caesar has just been placed among the stars, Augustus will find a home among the stars; but Ovid, the lowly exile who turned his talents on the universe and his irony on the State, by virtue of his spiritual and poetic immortality will pass *beyond* the stars, and so transcend and triumph over these last deceptive symbols of non-existent order.

It is to be hoped that these three versions of the *Metamorphoses*, and particularly Mr. Humphries', will, whatever their original pur-

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pose, rescue the poem from that fourth-form mentality which looks for pretty fairy-tales and nothing more. It is mightily to be hoped that they will awaken people to read the poem as a structure of meaningful language which says something, to read it with the enlightened seeking of a critic such as Hermann Fraenkel,[3] rather than with the cloudy nostalgia of L. P. Wilkinson, Ovid's latest appreciator.[4] For it is certainly bitter irony, and more bitter tragedy, if a poet can pass beyond the stars, and find himself still among the Goths.

[3] *Ovid: A Poet Between Two Worlds.* University of California Press, 1945.
[4] *Ovid Recalled.* Cambridge University Press, 1955.

WILLIAM ARROWSMITH

News from Mojave

THREE NOVELS and a collection of short stories,[1] all workmanlike and devoted, all readable, all composed if not plotted from a good sense of craft and quickened by serious talent, each with its special stance more or less absorbed into its structure—this is seasonably good news of imaginative rainmaking. If none of these quite manage major weather, they all nonetheless make competent efforts; Mr. Gold has the honor of going after, if not quite of getting, the real thunder, while Miss Warner's artistry comes close to exploiting most of the possibilities of her limited form. Unlike the novelists, she makes the very most of her restrictions, and the achievement is handsome indeed.

But the impression of good rainmaking here is troubled—at least among the novelists—by a carking professional obsession with getting life out of death. It is, I suppose, a novelist's natural business to make rain in Mojave, to refresh with the imagination the life of experience which precedes morality and makes it finally valid and viable. And by a fortunate accident all three of these novels are in their special ways concerned with the love which refreshes life gone humdrum, dead and suburban with that special species of death the suburbs have come to stand for. Mr. Hartley's field is English suburban life with its tidy mortmain of the emotions; Mr. Gold is, first and last, coming to terms with that kind of life in the suburbs of Pittsburgh which involves us all, while Mr. Soldati's crucial informing background for his Roman novel is American academic suburbia generalized into America itself. Disruption in these deserts is provided for in both Hartley and Soldati by a straightforward sequence of double adultery and a crucial contrast of rigged perspectives—wild Wales against tamed suburbs in Mr.

[1] A PERFECT WOMAN, by *L. P. Hartley*. Knopf. $3.95. THE MAN WHO WAS NOT WITH IT, by *Herbert Gold*. Atlantic, Little Brown. $3.75. THE CAPRI LETTERS, by *Mario Soldati*, translated from the Italian by *Archibald Colquhoun*. Knopf. $1.25. WINTER IN THE AIR, by *Sylvia Townsend Warner*. Viking. $3.50.

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Hartley, and Roman sensuality against American sterility in Mr. Soldati. Mr. Gold, a suburban Borrow among the carnies, sends his young Telemachus away from home to search the carnival underworld for a father, a fate and a wife, before bringing him home to Pittsburgh to the real life learned of his own manhood. But in all these books, in one form or another, the concern that the dead cactus should be forced into loving growth causes the kind of compensatory trouble that obsessiveness will. In Mr. Gold at least the deepest trouble appears to me to be one of compulsive vitality, an attempt to compensate by bounce and skitter for whatever might focus the values of his characters. The novel is clotted with exuberance of style and metaphor, jazzy with obsessive sharpness of good lingo and insight, but finally not quite moving with the measure of its own life. In both Hartley and Soldati, on the other hand, the initial sterility of characters and situations swells so large, there is so great a need of life and such stultification of character, that neither author can really transform his characters or give them life. Indeed it is Soldati's theme that the death his American lives is so profound that even the hope of life is an illusion, and Mr. Hartley goes through the motions and excitements of love without ever coming close to its center. Against these troubles, Mr. Gold clearly takes the honors among the novelists: he is at least responsible to the *life* of his perception, though too hampered by his feeling of responsibility to give it naturalness.

Mr. Hartley's *A Perfect Woman* is, as an intended tragicomedy, an unsatisfactory performance, quite missing any firm lien between the tragic and the comic, and suffering everywhere from the gap it cannot close in a unified point of view. But despite its intentionally silly plot, it is a tight, well-written novel, controlled with fineness of perception on the fringes and emotional know-how that can never quite manage to contrive itself into action. At the center it is empty beyond hope of control and desperately uneven, lurching from gross satire to tenderness to an incongruous conclusion, impatient of any attitude that might hinder its hope of entertaining. The story itself is a simple thing of engineered improbabilities, and what little comedy there is derives from the mockery of its form. Into the grotesquely dull suburban lives of Harold and Isabel Eastwood comes a novelist who would be a dull ass under most any circumstances but looks downright debonair in the stultified world of the Eastwoods. He comes ostensibly for tax-relief but really for love, and contrives to persuade Harold to help him procure the Austrian barmaid at the local pub. Harold reluctantly agrees and immediately stumbles into love with the barmaid, while the novelist rushes into the waiting arms of the bored Isabel. At this juncture, a bizarre harpy named Elspeth, the novelist's cast-off mistress, slips in from the fog and mistakenly informs the *lumpen* German boyfriend of the barmaid that novelist and barmaid are bedding down together. The German lurches off and massacres bar-

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maid and novelist; the Eastwoods, touched by this idiotic tragedy and fortified by forgiveness after their strange adventures with these alien goblins, fall happily back into a marriage we are meant to understand as renewed by love.

In short, a quaint plot, depressingly reminiscent of Eliot's attempts in his latest plays to graft a drama of Christian conversion upon the slick comedy of marital misunderstanding. And, just as in Eliot's plays, it is not the plot here that prevents success, but the inability to put the plot to any credible moral or human use in relation to the characters. There is no play here between the conventional situation of the Eastwoods and their actual power as people; it is hard even to credit them with the capability for passion. They are conventional dullards caught up in the convention of the improbable, and when Mr. Hartley attempts to show them as truly illuminated, or as passing from dull to giddy to tragic and tender, the transformation fails because they refuse to survive the stark conventionality of their conception. Worse, it is not merely that both of the Eastwoods and the novelist are stock figures (alone of them all the barmaid survives as a living character), but that even their passion, the force of love that presumably illuminates them, is also a convention—the limp, tired, middle-aged ghost of sexual passion masquerading as the real thing and waving its bedraggled banner of *Amor vincit etcet.* Love requires at the least that its lovers be real, for its essential experience is, in Mr. Hartley's words, "a higher concentration of being." But except for the barmaid and Isabel's poignantly neurotic son Jeremy, there are no real lovers here. And this means, for the purpose of the novel, failure: an affair may succeed in making the priggish Eastwoods more broadminded and tolerant of each other, but it cannot possibly, unless leavened with real love, confer reality upon them. Technically, the chief difficulty with *A Perfect Woman* is its failure to resolve the tension between the conventions it employs and its naturalistic narrative. What is finally missing is the final work of the imagination—the material penetrated everywhere by the imagination and suffused with the forceful coherence of an inclusive point of view. Rather, both order and turbulence are visible in Mr. Hartley's novel, but visible separately without real relation.

The Capri Letters of Mario Soldati is a much more complex work than *A Perfect Woman*, and it is also a superior one, especially in the skill of its plotting and the way in which its concerns rise naturally, without argument or asides or fumbling, from its movement. Its method is irony, the deep continuous self-exposure of a first-person narrator, involved without foreknowledge in events and talking both out of the desperation of difficult experience and the vanity of confession. The novel represents an anatomizing, not of the American, but of the American intellectual, and if it is not a flattering portrait, it is not an unfriendly one, and certainly valid enough on the individual level. The plot is an involved one, and the involvement is

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crucial for its values, but essentially it is no more than an account of the adulterous Italian loves of an incompatible American couple. The husband, a tormented art historian, becomes sexually involved with an Italian girl he thinks he despises but from whom he cannot break loose, while the wife, equally tormented, is involved with a vulgar Romeo on Capri. Discovery, complicated by hysterical fear of blackmail, follows for the wife; before her husband's guilt is avowed, she dies in a plane crash en route to the States. The husband marries his Italian girl, installs her in suburban comfort in America and, as the novel closes, is once again on the point of fleeing back to Italy.

A curious crossing of perspectives is worth noticing here. For whereas Mr. Soldati is careful to have the Italy of his novel reported, not from Italian eyes, but in terms of the traditional American literary myth of Italy, his America is clearly seen more through the eyes of an Italian somewhat familiar with this country than through the eyes of his American protagonist. We are really dealing, that is, with a double myth, the warped American myth of sensual and instinctive Italy, without complication of reason, and the square, bleak, gadget-glorious America of Italian myth, without complication of the senses. The result is a surface of striking unreality, across which the American couple, tormented with their own unreality and unable to accept any reality which could satisfy their impossible standards, move like figures in a nightmare, while the Italians who touch their lives possess, in their vision of them, only the mysterious, inexplicable reality of hard sexual objects. The novel pivots on sex; but it is the ambiguous reality-status of sex for his Americans that fascinates Soldati; not its titillation, but its mysterious attraction as a symbol of reality and a badge of identity for the puritan conscience. Finally, it remains incomprehensible to the hero; he can articulate his belief that love *qua* love is incapable of distinguishing body and soul, but he cannot live it. What is true of sex is true likewise of his attitude toward his life; his desperate conviction that life is a *problem* to be solved; the distrust of any simplicity and the passionate pursuit of complexity as alone worthy of reality; the suspicion of evil in whatever is not understood, and the fascinating temptation not to understand, or even to want to, because it compounds both the risks and the complexities. From this circle, common decency cannot easily escape; its fate is either hypocrisy or boredom, and so it is with Soldati's hero: he travels in a closed circle, back and forth between America and Europe, driven and repelled by familiar realities he can neither reject nor accept, bored, desperate and prevented by his hideous demands upon reality from finding either a self or happiness.

The absence of any substantial reality from the novel is its chief weakness and for this reason Mr. Soldati introduces an Italian movie-maker to whom the hero's life-story is submitted as a script; but his real function is to do what he can to remove the strain of unreality which the first-person narrative of the hero, as incapable of understanding others as himself, succeeds in throwing over everything. Despite his

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patient kindly explanations of the simple humanity of the Italians in the story and his pity for both husband and wife, he simply cannot undo the mountainous apparatus of unreality which dooms him into insignificance. What remains is the punctilio of hopelessness from which the hero can never escape; but if one looks more closely, it seems clear that the hopelessness is permanent only because the narrative and the plot, not life, require it. The facts may suggest it, but they also suggest that the polarities of this novel, its rigid schematic opposition between real simplicity and unreal complexity, between reality and appearance and myth and truth, are less than the truth. Which is another way of saying that real turbulence here has been drained off by the needs of schematic order. But it is an unusual novel, and by far the most technically accomplished of those under review.

The Man Who Was Not With It is a powerful but a slow novel, and its skills of perspective and feeling outdistance its narrative ability. It is also, as I suggested, a compulsive book, with a feeling of insight pumped too hard and too often. The power of the unadorned narrative to sustain its meaning in action is not really trusted; we are constantly being told by the narrator, compulsively concerned that we get the meat of Gold's matter, what any single event means, how it alters the pattern of the past and points up the future. Nor is there really much play between the narrator's understanding of his experience and its meaning for the reader: he sees what is really there and sees it too well and too frequently to substantiate our sense that the meaning of experience comes hard for him. Moreover, this heavy apparatus of perception and comment is not required by the complexity of plot or theme, all the more since Mr. Gold's pattern of growth is neatly marked off in action and development of character. We understand, without being told, just when the adolescent becomes a man, what the world of "carnie" as against suburbia means, and how the hero comes on his fate. We understand them just because the imagination *is* working properly, and when Mr. Gold ditches his narrative for direct statement, he is ditching the novelist's imagination.

The plot is simple. The narrator, the young Bud Williams, has fled the constraining pretense of his suburban home and his hopeless father for the world of the carnival. Against the suburbs, the carnies appear to have bravery as against cowardice, and a life of complete commitment as against the endurance of failure; with the carnies, one is "with it and for it" and, being marginal, one has the illusion of both independence and bravery. But it is also, and more deeply, a world of real selfishness, without passionate will or desire, and bent on kicks and "signifying" without meaning, jagged without identity or reality. Here Bud picks up the habit of morphine, the double symbol of both the "kicks" and the torpor of the fateless will. He is finally helped out of his habit by his carnie hero, a prince of con called Grack, and packed off home to Pittsburgh. Here he finds himself still cut off from a fate and alienated from both of his fathers, ignominiously failing

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Grack in his attempt to find a fate, and nearly murdering his own father. When he returns to the carnies, he finds Grack a deserter, no longer "with it" and deep in the "habit"; he also falls in love with a carnie-girl, Joy, whom he marries. At the next moment the sick and fallen Grack reappears, under suspicion of murder, and Bud and Joy, unable to help him with the love he now distrusts, spend their honeymoon taking him from Georgia to Detroit to escape the police. Grack, however, is caught, and Joy and Bud, as the novel closes, are off to Pittsburgh to accept the expanded reality of their own making, "with it" in a transfigured sense.

Much power is generated from this simple plot of the hero's progress from inadequacy to adequacy of conviction, and unlike both Soldati and Hartley, Gold genuinely forces both value and reality *and* love out of his action. It is because Bud Williams is real and because he acts out of real desperation and also real pleasure that he is capable of growth, as against Grack, who can be the prince of con only so long as his actions never, by disinterested love, betray the carnie code; Bud can forsake carniedom only because he has learned to love. And when Bud betrays Grack, the man who dared friendship in violation of the whole fabric of his life, the betrayal is mortal for Grack and he is forever alienated from being "with it" in any sense, and even from understanding Bud's revised version of the life of the "mark." All he can do is to test it at its crucial points—its love, its will, its weakness—while Bud, in agony of guilt and love, helplessly watches him crumble into the unreality of his habit. It is well done, structured nicely and conceived with passion, though paced poorly. Consistently one has the impression that vitality as willful as Gold's has a real cost, undercutting what has been created with repetition, as though a man should say a thing well and then say the same thing well again. Certainly the pervasive explanations of the meaning of the action by the hero operate to upstage the action; and when you add to this the compulsive jerkiness of sharp talk and charged metaphor—running monotonously to hickies, pimples, boils, warts, Adam's-apples, toe-pie and worms—what is genuine fictional imagination here gets swamped momentarily by this burgeoning of the props. Unload the excrescences, however, and what remains is a remarkable novel and a remarkably promising talent.

Within severe limits, Miss Sylvia Townsend Warner is an almost flawless writer, and *Winter in the Air* is an astonishingly sustained collection of a score of short stories. It is rare to find delicacy so untroubled by the fear of preciousness, and fastidiousness so capable of emotional, rather than verbal or atmospheric, precision. She is incapable of real power and these stories are innocent of ideas, but all worked up out of a scrupulous literacy and a fine eye, invariably particular and minor, but with the right power of the minor that flows from a good imagination, poised for the particular. She likes the lambent touch, an eloping girl in a vulgar bakery who speaks to a cat

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as though to a bridesmaid, the dying matriarch with the pride of dead children, the flickering of sexual antennae between an old tart and a schoolboy. And the language is exactly equal to the attempt: close, controlled, ripe with precision more than passion, deceptively discursive before falling to its true resolution, an effortless surprised rightness. The emotions she invokes are peripheral, but she gets her power by hinting of their real relation to the remembered center—nostalgia backed by love, arrogant eccentricity leaning on loss, sudden shocking revelation calmed back into the common pattern of life, and rightly calmed. But always the minor: wit rather than humor; loss more than tragedy; the quiet surrender, not the noisy triumph; irony, regret, wry conquest, autumn, disappointment, well-bred endurance. Such perfection of the minor is a blessing, though I confess I found the perch through twenty stories a little too much rare air, and giving perilously little purchase to American hands and the American liking for the big guns of the novel, however botched.

A COMMUNICATION

Dear Sirs:

I believe with Dryden that the job of critics is to be "defenders of poets, and commentators on their works: to illustrate obscure beauties; to place some passages in a better light; to redeem others from malicious interpretations; to help out an author's modesty, who is not ostentatious of his wit," and I take quite seriously Mr. Alan Ansen's charge that I failed to note Mr. Chester Kallman's contribution to the libretto of *The Rake's Progress* in my article for the Spring, 1955 HUDSON REVIEW. If, in my desire to help out Mr. Auden's modesty, I have trampled upon Mr. Kallman's, I regret it very sincerely.

May I, however, remind Mr. Ansen that before his very valuable communication in the last HUDSON REVIEW no mere critic—or scholar, either—could have known just what Mr. Kallman's share in *The Rake's Progress* amounted to, nor did his published work shed any light upon it; whereas it fits quite naturally into the whole body of Mr. Auden's. Moreover, my article was devoted to analysis of ideas and meaning, and Mr. Ansen concedes that the scheme was largely Mr. Auden's. The three passages I quoted from Mr. Kallman's part merely illustrate certain features of that scheme, and I made no comment upon their merit in themselves.

I must protest against the way Mr. Ansen, by rather selective quotation, makes me say that all the lyrics are of the highest order. I spoke, in fact (p. 106), of "three or four lovely lyrics," and I will stand by that.

Yours truly,

GEORGE MCFADDEN

Philadelphia

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